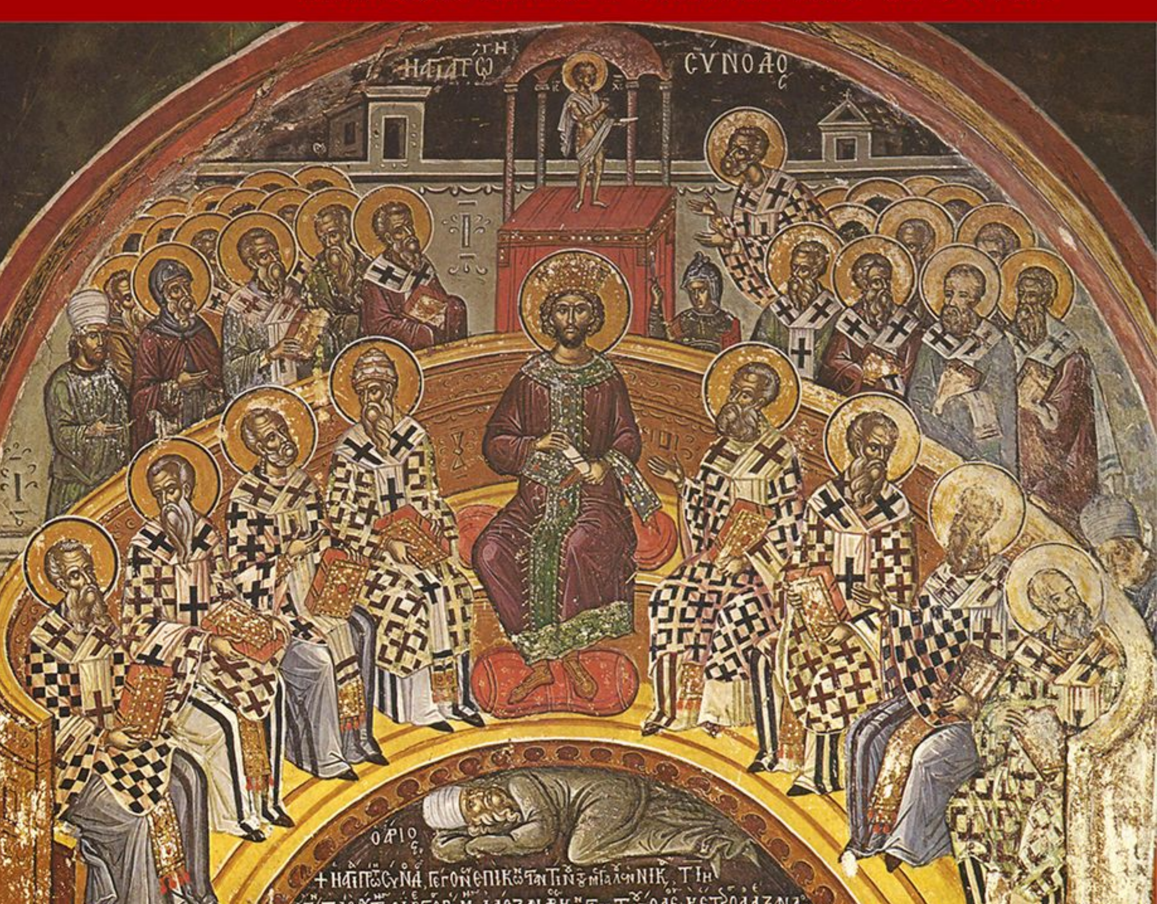
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THE IDEA OF NICAEA IN THE EARLY CHURCH COUNCILS, AD 431–451

Mark S. Smith

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For Phillippa, Phoebe, and Sophie

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In detailing the proceedings of the mid-fifth-century councils, I have generally provided the reader with translations of the conciliar *acta* that follow the elegant and lucid renderings of Professor Richard Price. His edition of the Chalcedonian *acta* has already been published (Liverpool University Press, 2005, with M. Gaddis), and I am grateful for having been able to consult his forthcoming volume on the Ephesine material (Liverpool University Press, with T. Graumann). I wish to thank Professor Price for his generosity, and for his many insightful remarks on my work.

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βλέπομεν γὰρ ἄρτι δι᾽ ἐσόπτρου ἐν αἰνίγματι,
τότε δὲ πρόσωπον πρὸς πρόσωπον

Contents

Abbreviations and Other Conventions

PRIMARY SOURCES

ACO	*Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum,* ed. E. Schwartz (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1927–40)
	V *Collectio Vaticana*
	CS *Collectio Segvierana*
	CA *Collectio Atheniensis*
	CV *Collectio Veronensis*
	CC *Collectio Casinensis*
	CP *Collectio Palatina*
AW	*Athanasius Werke*
CCSL	*Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina*
CJ	*Codex Justinianus*
CSCO	*Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium*
CSEL	*Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*
CTh	*Theodosiani libri XVI cum Constitutionibus Sirmondianis* [*Codex Theodosianus*]¸ed. T. Mommsen and P. M. Meyer (Berlin: Weidmann, 1905)
FAT	*Fathers of the Church series* (1947–)
GCS	*Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller*
Gr. 1431	*Codex Vaticanus Gr. 1431: Eine antichalkedonische Sammlung aus der Zeit Kaiser Zenos*, ed. E. Schwartz, Philosophisch-historische Klasse 32.6 (Munich: Abhandlungen der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1927)
Mansi	*Sanctorum Conciliorum Nova et Amplissima Collectio*, ed. J. D. Mansi
PG	*Patrologia Graeca*, ed. J.-P. Migne
PGL	G. W. H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961)
PL	*Patrologia Latina*, ed. J.-P. Migne
PO	*Patrologia Orientalis*
RSCC	*Roman State and Christian Church: A Collection of Legal Documents to AD 535*, ed. P. R. Coleman-Norton, 3 vols (London: SPCK)
SC	*Sources Chrétiennes*
Urk.	Opitz, H. G. (1934–5), *Athanasius Werke*, II.1: *Urkunden zur Geschichte des Arianischen Streites 318–328* (Berlin: de Gruyter)

JOURNALS AND OTHER SECONDARY WORKS

AHC	*Annuarium Historiae Conciliorum*
Byz	*Byzantion*
ByzF	*Byzantinische Forschungen*
ByzZ	*Byzantinische Zeitschrift*
CH	*Church History*
CHRC	*Church History and Religious Culture*
CR	*Christian Remembrancer*
CSSS	*Canadian Society of Syriac Studies Journal*
ETL	*Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses*
GOTR	*Greek Orthodox Theological Review*
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
JECS	*Journal of Early Christian Studies*
JEH	*Journal of Ecclesiastical History*
JTS	*Journal of Theological Studies*
MSR	*Mélanges de Science Religieuse*
OCP	*Orientalia Christiana Periodica*
REArm	*Revue des Études Arméniennes*
RHE	*Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique*
RSPT	*Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques*
RTL	*Revue théologique de Louvain*
SBAWPH	*Sitzungsberichte der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-historische Klasse*
SCH	*Studies in Church History*
SCI	*Scripta Classica Israelica*
SEA	*Studia Ephemeridis Augustinianum*
SJT	*Scottish Journal of Theology*
SP	*Studia Patristica*
TRE	*Theologische Realenzyklopädie*
VC	*Vigiliae Christianae*
ZKG	*Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*
ZNW	*Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*

The following referencing conventions are followed in the work below:

The 'short title' system is used throughout. The first reference to a secondary work is given with full bibliographical details, and subsequent references employ an abbreviated form.

Page numbers follow immediately after the bibliographical reference.

Line numbers follow immediately after page numbers, preceded by a colon.

When direct quotations are made from a patristic source, the critical edition of the text (to which the page and line numbers correspond) is indicated (e.g. '*SC* 110' refers to *Sources Chrétiennes*, volume 110).

When quoting from the *ACO*, the *collectiones* reference is provided (e.g. CC.10); or, in the case of the Chalcedonian proceedings, the session details are given, following the numeration of the Greek *acta* (e.g. IV.23).

For ease of reading, I have provided the original Greek and Latin sources in translation in the main body of the text. These translations have generally followed Price and Graumann (forthcoming) for the Ephesine material, Price and Gaddis for the Chalcedonian material, and McEnerney for Cyril's letters, with occasional amendments. In all significant cases, I have given the Greek or Latin text in a footnote, so that readers can check the translation against the original.

1

Introduction: Nicaea in Context

Nicaea was afforded a place of special honour at the church councils of the mid-fifth century. At Ephesus (431), at Constantinople (448), at Ephesus again (449), and at Chalcedon (451), the assembled bishops repeatedly affirmed the unique authority and sufficiency of the Nicene Creed, and praised the 'fathers' of Nicaea for their unimpeachable faith. This reverence for Nicaea in the East should perhaps come as no surprise—for, since the remarkable success of the Athanasian pro-Nicene polemic of the mid-fourth century, it had become widely accepted that any articulation of orthodoxy (especially if made in a conciliar context) should look to the 'great and holy synod' of 325 as its benchmark and touchstone. However, the very ubiquity of appeals to Nicaea in this period has acted to inhibit the closer study of their discursive role. Acknowledgement of one's adherence to Nicaea, it has often been assumed, had become so routine and stereotyped as to be essentially meaningless—the banal 'background noise' to a debate about orthodoxy whose main focus had shifted elsewhere.[1]

Yet the use of 'Nicaea' in the conciliar context of the mid-fifth century was neither irredeemably vacuous, nor drearily static. This was a period, as Lim has put it, of the 'self-conscious formation of tradition', whose pre-eminent task was 'to summarize and define the accomplishments of previous ages'.[2] Nicaea was, in this way, not a past triumph but a present battleground, not a specimen fixed in amber but a malleable discursive tool. Recourse to Nicaea, indeed, became the primary means by which conflicting theological construals were justified, and through which new orthodoxies were disguised as that which had always been believed. 'Nicaea' could thus function as a helpful cypher, since avowed fidelity to the simple wording of the Creed conveniently shrouded a multitude of doctrinal eccentricities; but it could also be employed as a powerful weapon, providing the ammunition with which an opponent's theology was condemned as hopelessly heterodox.

[1] Cf. P. T. R. Gray (1989), 'The Select Fathers: Canonising the Patristic Past', *SP* 23, 21–36.

[2] R. Lim (1995), *Public Disputation, Power and Social Order in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press), 228.

Appeals to Nicaea thus embodied a diversity of subtle rhetorical strategies, and never more so than during church councils, at which bishops gathered explicitly to re-enact and reaffirm the unchanging orthodoxy of Nicaea; and in conciliar *acta*, wherein, through careful textual arrangement and argumentation, a particular construal of Nicaea could be enshrined, and threatening counter-construals could be rejected. Yet it was also here, in the conciliar context, that the dilemmas the idea of Nicaea exposed for the articulation of orthodoxy were at their most potent. What was the point of doctrinal formulation, if Nicaea had already sufficiently expounded the truth? What was the point of another council, if the great council of 325 had already authoritatively established the faith? What was the point of the bishops again coming together, if the fathers of Nicaea had already achieved all that was needful?

The centrality of the idea of Nicaea in mid-fifth-century conciliar discourse—in all its dynamic and protean complexity—was thus profoundly problematic. The primary discursive instrument for the articulation of true orthodoxy was also the means by which that orthodoxy could be resisted or opposed: the idea of Nicaea, in this sense, was both the ground of the church's unity and the source of her strife. Nicaea's capacity for flexible re-expression opened up ways for subsequent councils to associate (and even elide) their own work with its sacred authority, but also made possible the refutation of such construals on equally impeccable 'Nicene' grounds. The idea of Nicaea was (in quasi-Hegelian terms) both problem *and* solution, both disease *and* cure, both the cause of episcopal divisions and—if creatively utilized—the very means by which those divisions could be overcome. The idea of Nicaea was, in short, at the very heart of mid-fifth-century conciliar discourse, and its peculiarly problematizing effect on the articulation of orthodoxy helps to explain the extraordinary series of ecclesial convulsions that marked these decades.

This study, then, seeks to analyse the ways in which the idea of 'Nicaea' functioned in the conciliar context of the mid-fifth century. Despite the significant opportunities that the unusually rich source material affords, research into this crucial dynamic remains lamentably underdeveloped. Both older accounts of the period (such as that of Kidd) and more recent treatments (such as those of McGuckin and Wessel) have largely taken Cyril's self-presentation as the faithful interpreter of Nicaea at face value, and so have colluded in a teleological narrative in which the triumphs of Ephesus I and Chalcedon represent the inevitable victory of the authentically 'Nicene' party.[3] Indeed, on the topic under investigation, the mid-fifth century has managed to fall into something of a scholarly gap: Ayres has given helpful attention to the

[3] B. J. Kidd (1922), *A History of the Church to AD 461* (Oxford: Clarendon Press); J. A. McGuckin (1994), *St. Cyril of Alexandria: The Christological Controversy: Its History, Theology and Texts* (Leiden: Brill); S. Wessel (2004), *Cyril of Alexandria and the Nestorian Controversy: The Making of a Saint and a Heretic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

use of 'Nicaea' as a cypher in the Arian controversies, but concludes his account in 381; while Price and Gray have contributed nuanced readings of the subsequent construal of orthodoxy, but largely with regard to sixth-century developments.[4] Graumann's analysis of the concept of the 'church fathers' in fourth- and fifth-century debates has provided an in-depth examination of certain related discursive strategies, but even this work closes with the events of 431, and does not pursue some significant themes further.[5]

The only substantial account of the role of Nicaea in the fifth century remains Sieben's older study, but, as the ensuing analysis will suggest, the work is not without its problems.[6] Sieben's book provides a number of episodic sketches that trace the *Konzilsidee* from the first to the ninth century, and within this, he offers a series of reflections on developing ideas of conciliar authority, and the role of Nicaea in that process. Yet Sieben's account of Nicaea's *Monopolstellung* is unduly monolithic and overly simplistic, he misreads (and so underplays) the contribution of Ephesus I, and his evidence is too frequently made to fit an underlying narrative which finds its inexorable culmination in Vatican I and II.

Thus, in critically engaging with the work of Sieben and others, this monograph will not only seek to provide a more thorough and convincing assessment of the idea of 'Nicaea' than has hitherto been offered, but will also contend that its discursive centrality in shaping ecclesial identity and governing conciliar practice during these years has not been fully appreciated.

The ways in which 'Nicaea' was fought over and negotiated in this period, then, do not merely provide a helpful description of how orthodoxy was established (or, in the minds of others, betrayed), but also raise deeper questions about how that orthodoxy was understood. For at the heart of the struggles over 'Nicaea' lay the problem of how continuity with the Nicene past could be persuasively maintained, whilst the fresh challenges of new doctrinal contexts could be genuinely confronted. It was the dilemma, in other words, of how 'Nicaea' could be both reaffirmed as sufficient and yet also acknowledged (even if not openly) as inadequate; of how the Creed could both remain inviolate and yet also be supplemented; of how the 'great and holy synod' could both abide unchallenged and yet also admit (in some sense at least) to authoritative successors.

[4] L. Ayres (2004), *Nicaea and its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press); P. T. R. Gray (1997), 'Covering the Nakedness of Noah: Reconstruction and Denial in the Age of Justinian', *ByzF* 24, 193–205; R. M. Price (2009), 'The Second Council of Constantinople (553) and the Malleable Past', in R. M. Price and M. Whitby (eds), *Chalcedon in Context: Church Councils 400–700* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press), 117–32.

[5] T. Graumann (2002), *Die Kirche der Väter: Vätertheologie und Väterbeweis in den Kirchen des Ostens bis zum Konzil von Ephesus (431)* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck).

[6] H. J. Sieben (1979), *Die Konzilsidee der Alten Kirche* (Paderborn: Schöningh).

A detailed analysis of the idea of 'Nicaea' also allows light to be shed on wider themes of ecclesial reception and doctrinal development. Of course, any such notion of 'doctrinal development' would have been entirely rejected by the bishops who assembled at the mid-fifth century councils. There can be a tendency to conceive of these men as rather like modern-day Parliamentarians, albeit in late antique dress: there to weigh the evidence of fresh ideas, come to a conclusion, vote accordingly, and then adopt whatever new dogma the majority had determined. Yet nothing could be further from the truth. Rather, since the faith once delivered to the saints was understood as complete, perfect and unchanging[7], the task before the bishops was simply to repudiate doctrinal innovations (which, being new, were therefore wrong), and so confirm the true faith. Decisions were made not through the cut-and-thrust of debate but on the basis of an appeal to theological authorities (Scripture, the Nicene Creed, and the teaching of the 'fathers').[8] The bishops did not see themselves as 'voting about God'[9], but instead as affirming their allegiance to a consensus that had already been established, and, through their unanimity, bearing witness to the unifying presence of the Holy Spirit in their midst.

Nonetheless, though largely foreign to the assumptions of fifth-century bishops, theologians have found some model, however vague, of doctrinal 'development' during this period hard to avoid.[10] The most penetrating attempt to grapple with this question remains Newman's *Essay on the Development of Doctrine*.[11] For Newman, the passing of time was not a threat to the articulation of orthodox truth, but the necessary means for the fullness of that truth to flower. Doctrinal development, then, occurred rather like the growth of an idea, wherein various aspects of the truth, present from the beginning *in nuce*, gradually uncoiled in and through the particularities of history.[12] In this way, Newman was able to affirm a profound continuity in the Church's teaching through the centuries, whilst also giving due weight to significant changes in the details of her doctrine.

However, in seeking to avoid ascribing to the patristic past a mere 'theology of repetition', Newman's preference for a model of homogenous evolution raised significant problems.[13] As Mozley astutely observed, Newman's account

[7] For a classic expression, see Eusebius, *H.E.* IV.7.13.

[8] The point is nicely made by: R. M. Price (2017), 'Conciliar Theology, Resources and Limitations', in A. Heil and A. von Stockhausen (eds), *Die Synoden im trinitarischen Streit* (Berlin: de Gruyter), 1–19.

[9] Cf. the unfortunately titled R. MacMullen (2006), *Voting about God in the Early Church Councils* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press).

[10] See, for instance, the incisive remarks of M. Edwards (2015), *Religions of the Constantinian Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 292–4.

[11] J. H. Newman (1878), *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* (rev. edn, London: Pickering).

[12] Cf. Newman, *Development*, I.1.4.

[13] On transcending a 'theology of repetition', see Williams's helpful remarks: R. Williams (2001), *Arius: Heresy and Tradition* (London: SCM Press), 235–6; and also Ayres, *Nicaea*, 425–9.

ultimately succumbed to a form of the naturalistic fallacy, wherein such developments as actually occurred were by definition necessary, and, because necessary, true: there could be no positive role, for instance, for doctrinal pruning or doctrinal demolition.[14] Newman's organic progressivism, in other words, was a product of its age—relying as it did upon a serene confidence that the history of doctrine was essentially a narrative of continual growth and improvement. As Lash has put it, 'theories of homogeneous evolution paradoxically bear witness to the very phenomenon they were elaborated to deny, namely, the culturally and historically conditioned nature of successive contexts of Christian thought and expression'.[15]

It is perhaps no surprise, then, that this study will contend that the shifts in the idea of Nicaea in the mid-fifth century do not straightforwardly bear out Newman's model. Rather, it will be suggested, the most fruitful way of understanding the wider significance of these changes is found in Rush's concept of 'rejuvenating reception'.[16] Building on Hans Robert Jauss's literary hermeneutics[17] and Congar's work on the theology of reception[18], Rush emphasized not linear development in ecclesial dogma but episodic reformulation, in which the past is constantly being re-received afresh in the present, so that authentic continuity is expressed precisely *through* adaptation and modification.[19] Such an approach takes seriously the irreducible particularity of any given historical moment—that an 'artefact' such as the Nicene Creed, itself the product of specific circumstances and motivations, cannot simply be reaffirmed in a new time and context without remainder. Rather, in Jauss's terms, it is an 'open work', 'finished in its unfinishedness', which must be encountered and received anew.[20] In this way, each 'reception' of Nicaea in the period under investigation retained an intrinsic provisionality and incompleteness, and was more likely to demonstrate its authenticity by provoking further fruitful questions than by seeking to close down discussion once and for all.

[14] J. B. Mozley (1847), 'Newman on Development', *CR* 13, 117–265, esp. 121, 139; cf. N. Lash (1975), *Newman on Development: The Search for an Explanation in History* (London: Sheed & Ward), 116–21; N. Lash (1973), *Change in Focus: A Study of Doctrinal Change and Continuity* (London: Sheed & Ward), 143ff.; M. Wiles (1974), *The Remaking of Christian Doctrine* (London: SCM Press), 5–19.

[15] Lash, *Change in Focus*, 122–3.

[16] O. Rush (1997), *The Reception of Doctrine: An Appropriation of Hans Robert Jauss' Reception Aesthetics and Literary Hermeneutics* (Rome: Pontifical Gregorian University Press).

[17] H. R. Jauss (1982), *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, tr. T. Bahti (Brighton: Harvester).

[18] Especially Y. Congar (1972), 'La "réception" comme réalité ecclésiologique', *RSPT* 56, 369–403.

[19] Rush, *Reception*, 187ff.

[20] O. Rush (1993), 'Reception Hermeneutics and the "Development" of Doctrine: An Alternative Model', *Pacifica* 6, 130; cf. B. Quash (2013), *Found Theology: History, Imagination and the Holy Spirit* (London: Bloomsbury), 123–64.

Thus, it will be argued that the problem of Nicaea's discursive centrality, yet practical inadequacy, was in part solved through the fashioning of tools for its creative re-reception. In this way, the capacity of 'Nicaea' for flexible re-expression could be harnessed as a means for securing, rather than undermining, its faithful confirmation: le dur ne dure pas, seul dure le doux.[21] Paradoxically, then, the most theologically creative construals of Nicaea were often also those that were the most insistent on their unswerving loyalty to the fathers of 325: inveterate conservatism was not so much the barrier to innovation but rather the cloak under which such innovation was secured.

The ensuing chapters will analyse the changing ways in which the idea of Nicaea was articulated in the conciliar context of the mid-fifth century.

After outlining the problems with the inherited Athanasian construal of 'Nicaea' as uniquely authoritative and solely sufficient, it will be argued that the conciliar fiasco of 431 was primarily attributable to the failure convincingly to resolve the profound conflict between rival ideas of 'Nicaea' that the Nestorian controversy had fatefully exposed. At the same time, however, the unique opportunities afforded by the conciliar context of Ephesus (not least the production of written *acta*) also stimulated new hermeneutical methods for 'reading' Nicaea, and so for eliding present conciliar activity with Nicaea's past conciliar authority. It will further be contended that the dramatic conciliar convulsions of 448–51 are primarily explicable in the light of the divergent trajectories of reception of Ephesus I, and the contrasting construals of 'Nicaea' that those different receptions embodied.

The role of Nicaea in the councils of 448, 449, and 451 will then be assessed in turn. The increasingly shrewd appeal to 'Nicaea' as a means to resist the imposition of new Nicene 'orthodoxies' developed alongside the gradual refinement of strategies to distinguish between true and false fidelity to Nicaea. Notably, those latter strategies sought to defend the special authority of Nicaea precisely by requiring subscription to additional textual and conciliar authorities deemed necessary to 'receive' Nicaea rightly. The unstable aftermath of Chalcedon serves as a fitting endpoint to the study, since it reveals that while the council of 451 had achieved some success in subjecting the idea of Nicaea to a convincing 'rejuvenating reception', it could ultimately offer only the illusion of finality.

The thesis of this study, in short, is that the idea of 'Nicaea' functioned as the unstable heart of mid-fifth-century conciliar discourse, and that its capacity for creative re-expression explains not only the intractability of the dispute over its authentic interpretation during these years, but also the significant new paths in the articulation of credal and conciliar authority that it uniquely stimulated.

[21] M. Serres (2008), *La guerre mondiale* (Paris: Le Pommier), 115.

2

The Council of Nicaea and Its Early Reception

The Nestorian controversy dramatically exposed a series of underlying tensions in the inherited assumptions concerning the meaning of 'Nicaea' and in the rhetorical strategies commonly employed to express Nicene orthodoxy, and so ensured that the idea of Nicaea would become the central battleground of Ephesus 431. In this chapter, then, the earlier reception of Nicaea is analysed, so that the subsequent conflict can be set in its proper context.

THE COUNCIL OF NICAEA (325)

The unprecedented scale of the first great 'oecumenical council'[1] was testament, first and foremost, to Constantine's desire for a powerful piece of imperial propaganda. Here was a glorious picture of the emperor celebrating his Vicennalia amidst the triumph of a 'second victory'[2], by which he had brought peace to the Church, just as he had brought peace to the Empire. Eusebius' *Vita Constantini*, for all its inflated, self-serving panegyric, helpfully

[1] I provide here only a brief sketch of the circumstances of the Council, insofar as they are relevant to the wider themes of this study. Fuller accounts can be found in: C. Luibheid (1982), *The Council of Nicaea* (Galway: Galway University Press); Ayres, *Nicaea*, 85–101; T. D. Barnes (1981), *Constantine and Eusebius* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), 208–23; M. Edwards (2006), 'The First Council of Nicaea', in: M. M. Mitchell, F. M. Young, and K. S. Bowie (eds), *The Cambridge History of Christianity*, I: *Origins to Constantine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 552–67; R. P. C. Hanson (1988), *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God: The Arian Controversy 318–381* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark), 152–80; J. N. D. Kelly (1972), *Early Christian Creeds* (3rd edn, London: Longman), 205–62; J. N. D. Kelly (1958), *Early Christian Doctrines* (London: A&C Black), 223–51; Williams, *Arius*, 67–81.

[2] Eus., *V.C.* III.14 (Winkelmann, 88.17). Nicaea itself meant 'Victory' (Eus., *V.C.* III.6.1). Constantine, like his pagan imperial forebears, associated earthly harmony with divine blessing (cf. Eus., *V.C.* II.71), but his actions were now given a Christian gloss: Eusebius describes Nicaea's harmony as providing a 'representation of the kingdom of Christ': Eus., *V.C.* III.15.2 (Winkelmann, 89.9).

reveals how Constantine's desire for grandeur must have profoundly shaped the contemporary 'idea of a council': men still bearing the wounds of imperial persecution[3] now travelled on the *cursus publicus*,[4] hastening as 'sprinters from the starting-line' to see a 'strange marvel';[5] they sat in hushed silence to behold Constantine, 'decorated with the dazzling brilliance of gold and precious stones', opening the Council 'like some heavenly angel of God'[6]; they found themselves lavished with daily meals[7] and generous gifts,[8] feasting with the emperor on the plush couches of the imperial palace.[9]

Constantine's involvement ensured that Nicaea set a new standard for the size and geographical representativeness of church councils: although Western involvement was meagre, there were still perhaps some 220 bishops in attendance, from a wide range of provinces.[10] Indeed, although the term 'oecumenical' originally lacked any grand theological overtones,[11] the fact that Constantine, Eustathius, Eusebius, and Athanasius all come to exaggerate the number of bishops present may reflect a contemporary awareness of the unique character of the Council.[12]

However, whilst Constantine's role at Nicaea helped to shape the perceived criteria for authoritative conciliar activity (size, representativeness, and imperial presence), it also demonstrated the degree to which conciliar decisions could be warped by imperial concerns. Constantine's concern for unity, and his perennial predilection for 'team players',[13] ensured that when he discovered Ossius' and Eustathius' attempt to 'pre-judge the issue' at the Council of Antioch,[14] he moved the 'great and priestly synod'[15] away from Marcellus and towards Eusebius of Nicomedia and Theognis of Nicaea.[16] At the Council

[3] Theod., *H.E.* I.10. [4] Eus., *V.C.* III.6.
[5] Eus., *V.C.* III.6.2 (Winkelmann, 84.1–2).
[6] Eus., *V.C.* III.10.3 (Winkelmann, 86.9–12). [7] Eus., *V.C.* III.9 (cf. Theod., *H.E.* I.10).
[8] Eus., *V.C.* III.16. [9] Eus., *V.C.* III.15.
[10] Parvis derives 218 names from conflating the various signature lists: S. Parvis (2006), *Marcellus of Ancyra and the Lost Years of the Arian Controversy, 325–345* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 255–6; cf. E. Honigmann (1939), 'La Liste originale des pères de Nicée', *Byz* 14, 17–76.
[11] H. Chadwick (1972), 'The Origin of the Title "Oecumenical Council"', *JTS* n.s. 23, 132–5. The term is applied to Nicaea by various parties by the late 330s, for instance Eus., *V.C.* III.6.1 (Winkelmann, 83.18); Ath., *Apol. Sec.* 7.2 (Opitz, 93.20).
[12] Constantine reports 'more than 300 bishops' (Opitz, *Urk.* 25.5, 53.7), Eusebius says their number exceeded 250 (Eus., *V.C.* III.8; Winkelmann, 85.13), Eustathius estimates about 270 (Theod., *H.E.* I.8.1; Parmentier, 34.1), and Athanasius (before later settling on the special figure of 318) suggests around 300 (Ath., *Decr.* 3.1; Opitz, 3.2–3).
[13] H. A. Drake (2000), *Constantine and the Bishops: The Politics of Intolerance* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press), 250, cf. Eus., *V.C.* I.44.3.
[14] H. Chadwick (1958), 'Ossius of Cordova and the Presidency of the Council of Antioch, 325', *JTS* n.s. 9.2, 303.
[15] Opitz, *Urk.* 18.15, 40.17 (from Schwartz's Greek).
[16] Opitz, *Urk.* 20; Constantine later claimed that Eusebius of Nicomedia had a significant influence over events at Nicaea: Opitz, *Urk.* 27.14.

itself, Constantine acted swiftly to reverse Eusebius of Caesarea's provisional deposition—being, it would appear, the first to declare the orthodoxy of Eusebius' theological statement.[17] Similarly, although Constantine dutifully enforced the Council's decisions, including the deposition and exile of Secundus and Theonas,[18] he subsequently interpreted those decisions according to his own (rather generous) construal of Nicaea's boundaries, allowing back both Eusebius of Nicomedia and Arius himself, once they had made a minimal assent to the Council's terms.[19] Constantine's involvement ensured, in short, that the precise nature of Nicaea's theological achievement would be contested from the start.

The actual proceedings of the Council of Nicaea are extremely difficult to reconstruct reliably. No stenographic record appears to have been kept (itself an indication that norms of conciliar procedure remained underdeveloped[20]), and so we are reliant on patchy evidence deeply coloured by personal concerns. Eusebius' need to vindicate his own position leads him to depict Nicaea as a grand affair dominated by an emperor favourably disposed towards him;[21] Athanasius' desire to justify the non-scriptural term *homoousios* means he construes proceedings as a kind of exegetical workshop;[22] Eustathius' concern to explain how the deceitful 'Ariomaniacs' could subscribe to the Creed results in a narrative of intrigue;[23] and the fifth-century historians Socrates and Sozomen seem intent on disguising the lack of documentary evidence by the addition of anecdotes and trivialities.[24]

It certainly appears that there was a lack of integration between the carefully choreographed opening ceremony (in which Constantine had emphasized the importance of a 'common harmony of sentiment' among the bishops[25]), and the actual business of theological debate. Eusebius of Nicomedia had signalled his high standing by giving the speech formally beginning the council,[26] yet when he came to deliver his own theological statement it was met not with acclamation but with 'great grief', and 'torn up in the sight of all'.[27] Constantine,

[17] Eus., *Ep. Caes.* 7 (Opitz, *Urk.* 22, 44.1).

[18] Following a pattern of imperial enforcement stretching back to Aurelian (Eus., *H.E.* VII.30.19); for the fear of banishment as encouraging episcopal assent at Nicaea, cf. Philost., *H.E.* I.10.

[19] Arius' subsequent appeal to Constantine cleverly emphasized his desire for ecclesial peace (Opitz, *Urk.* 30.5).

[20] Athanasius later seems largely reliant on memory (Ath., *Decr.* 19–20).

[21] Cf. Eus., *Ep. Caes. passim*; *V.C.* III.10–12.

[22] Ath., *Decr.* 19–20; *Ep. Afr.* 5.

[23] Theod., *H.E.* I.8.1–5.

[24] As, for instance, the encounter between Constantine and the Novatian Acesius (Soc., *H.E.* I.10).

[25] Eus., *V.C.* III.12.

[26] Eus., *V.C.* III.13.

[27] Eustathius in Theod., *H.E.* I.8.2 (Parmentier, 34.6); cf. Ambrose, *De Fid.* III.15. It is not likely that Eustathius here refers to Eusebius of Caesarea, since *his* initial submission was well received. Perhaps Ossius, who probably presided at Nicaea (he heads most of the Creed signature lists, and cf. Ath., *Fug.* 5), was getting revenge for Constantine's attempt to undermine the plans he had forged at the Council of Antioch.

in an effort to prevent further episcopal recrimination ('numberless assertions' now being put forth between the bishops), publically burnt the mass of personal petitions naming petty disputes between bishops, and Eusebius relates how his intervention seems to have encouraged a degree of reconciliation.[28] It is perhaps this very tactic about which the fiery Eustathius complains when he recalls how 'under the pretence of preserving peace, [they] imposed silence on all the ablest speakers'.[29]

The background to the composition of the Nicene Creed is the most difficult aspect of all to elucidate. Eusebius of Caesarea famously wished to claim that the council's Creed was simply a reworked version of his own—but Lietzmann and Kelly have demonstrated that this claim is textually untenable, and more likely reflects Eusebius' own desperate concern to prove his orthodoxy.[30] Eusebius seems equally untrustworthy in his claim that Constantine himself was the driving force behind the inclusion of the crucial word *homoousios* in the Creed—a compelling case has recently been made for seeing the hand of Alexander of Alexandria (perhaps in discussion with Ossius of Cordoba) in pushing this terminology to the fore.[31] The credal text itself runs as follows:

Πιστεύομεν εἰς ἕνα θεόν, πατέρα, παντοκράτορα,
πάντων ὁρατῶν τε καὶ ἀοράτων ποιητήν,

καὶ εἰς ἕνα κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν, τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ,
γεννηθέντα ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς, μονογενῆ, τουτέστιν ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ πατρός,
θεὸν ἐκ θεοῦ, φῶς ἐκ φωτός, θεὸν ἀληθινὸν ἐκ θεοῦ ἀληθινοῦ,
γεννηθέντα οὐ ποιηθέντα, ὁμοούσιον τῷ πατρί,
δι᾽ οὗ τὰ πάντα ἐγένετο τά τε ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ καὶ τὰ ἐν τῇ γῇ,
τὸν δι᾽ ἡμᾶς τοὺς ἀνθρώπους καὶ διὰ τὴν ἡμετέραν σωτηρίαν κατελθόντα καὶ σαρκωθέντα,
ἐνανθρωπήσαντα, παθόντα καὶ ἀναστάντα τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ, ἀνελθόντα εἰς τοὺς οὐρανοὺς
ἐρχόμενον κρῖναι ζῶντας καὶ νεκρούς.

καὶ εἰς τὸ ἅγιον πνεῦμα.

τοὺς δὲ λέγοντας ἦν ποτε ὅτε οὐκ ἦν καὶ πρὶν γεννηθῆναι οὐκ ἦν καὶ ὅτι ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων
ἐγένετο ἢ ἐξ ἑτέρας ὑποστάσεως ἢ οὐσίας φάσκοντας εἶναι [ἢ κτιστὸν] ἢ τρεπτὸν ἢ ἀλλοιωτὸν τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ
τούτους ἀναθεματίζει ἡ καθολικὴ καὶ ἀποστολικὴ ἐκκλησία.[32]

[28] Eus., *V.C.*, III.13; Theod., *H.E.* I.10; cf. Ruf., *H.E.* X.2.

[29] Eustathius in Theod., *H.E.* I.7 (Parmentier, 34.9–11)—among the 'ablest speakers' Eustathius likely includes himself. Constantine may have sought more generally to sideline 'extremists' during the council.

[30] See especially Kelly, *Creeds*, 234–55.

[31] M. Edwards (2012), 'Alexander of Alexandria and the *Homoousion*', *Vigiliae Christianae* 66, 482–502; cf. Phil., *H.E.* I.7.

[32] For a full list of early textual witnesses, see W. Kinzig (ed.) (2017), *Faith in Formulae: A Collection of Early Christian Creeds and Creed-Related Texts*, 4 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press), I, 290ff.; cf. G. Dossetti (1967), *Il Simbolo di Nicae e di Constantinopoli* (Rome: Herder), 226–40. The bracketed 'or created' in the anathemas is likely an early (pro-Nicene) textual addition: M. Wiles (1993), 'A Textual Variant in the Creed of the Council of Nicaea', *SP* 26, 428–33.

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty,
maker of all things both visible and invisible;

and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God,
begotten from the Father, only-begotten, that is, from the substance of the Father;
God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father;
through whom all things came into being, both things in heaven and things on earth;
who for us humans and for our salvation descended, became incarnate, was made human, suffered, on the third day rose again, ascended into the heavens, will come to judge the living and the dead;

and in the Holy Spirit.

Those who say, 'There was when he was not', and 'He was not before he was begotten', and that he came to be from nothing, or those who claim that the Son of God is from another hypostasis or substance, [or created], or alterable, or mutable;
these the catholic and apostolic Church anathematizes.

As one would expect, the Creed's theological focus is on the key area of dispute in the Arian controversy—the eternal relation between the Father and the Son. It is thus in the first half of the second article, and in the anathemas, that we find a particular density of technical vocabulary. By contrast, the material on God the Father, on the Son's incarnation, and on the Holy Spirit is comparatively unremarkable, consisting of traditional affirmations, expressed in a self-consciously scriptural idiom.[33] This simple fact would come to have profound consequences for Nicaea's later reception, as subsequent generations of bishops returned to the text in search of answers to their Christological and pneumatological questions.

Moreover, the final text of the Creed likely bears witness to a tussle between those, like Alexander and Marcellus, who wanted to see a much greater swathe of 'Arian' theological opinion condemned, and Constantine, who sought a unity founded upon 'one unanimous opinion shared by all'.[34] The contentious *ousia* terminology (*ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ πατρός . . . ὁμοούσιον τῷ πατρί*) was included precisely because Arius had vociferously rejected its use with regard to the divine nature, as having inappropriately materialist connotations.[35] It was no doubt hoped that the whiff of such vocabulary would make the Creed entirely unpalatable to a significant proportion of Arius' supporters. However, this strategy was then subverted by Constantine himself, who at the Council explicitly authorized a breadth of interpretation with regard to the

[33] Cf. the analysis of: C. A. Beeley (2012), *The Unity of Christ: Continuity and Conflict in Patristic Tradition* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press), 119f. The comparative brevity of the Creed (in contrast, for instance, to the formula of the Council of Antioch from a few months before), and the simplicity of many of its clauses, was perhaps designed to help sweeten the pill for those bishops finding the *ousia* language difficult to swallow.

[34] Eus., *V.C.* III.12.1 (Winkelmann, 87.7–8).

[35] Arius' objections are quoted in: Ath., *Syn.* 16.3; Eusebius of Nicomedia had also objected to *homoousios* (Ambrose, *De Fid.* III.15).

homoousion that was just sufficient for bishops like Eusebius to be able to hold their noses and sign.[36] In doing so, the emperor bought for himself a short-term propaganda victory, at the cost of a lasting theological settlement.

It is well known that the Nicene Creed was barely mentioned for more than two decades after the council, and the reason is obvious: here was a document that few, if any, wanted to remember. The Creed's use of *ousia* language was clear in its anti-Arian intention, but its potentially materialistic and Samosatan character, not to mention its unscriptural provenance, made it deeply embarrassing to many bishops, even with Constantine's generous gloss. Furthermore, the synonymous use of *ousia* and *hypostasis* in the fourth anathema only added to fears among moderate Origenist bishops that the theological heartbeat of the Creed was Marcellan, and so Sabellian.[37] Conversely, the very fact that men such as Eusebius of Caesarea were able to sign up to the Creed at all rendered it a 'dismal failure' for those around Marcellus.[38] Indeed, a debate over the *homoousion* soon after 325 (preserved in Socrates) suggests that Nicaea bequeathed both terminological confusion and mutual recrimination: 'they could not agree among themselves, and therefore could in no way endure to be at peace'.[39] In the immediate aftermath of the council, letters were issued summarizing Nicaea's decisions—yet these place the matter of Arius' doctrine as only one of a number of important topics addressed (such as, for instance, the Meletian schism, and the date of Easter), and give no indication that the Creed itself was possessed of a special or unique authority.[40] The focus is on securing a resolution to the Arian question, not on the text by which that resolution was secured. Indeed, though the Council of Nicaea would be remembered for its size and grandeur, it is likely that very few of the attending bishops would have been displeased to see its Creed consigned to the dustbin of history.

If Nicaea began, historically, as something of a failure, a wider theological perspective allows a significant achievement of the Council to be nonetheless discerned. Nicaea's positive contribution, as Williams has shown, lay in its recognition (albeit at first dimly perceived) that 'theology is not only legitimate but necessary'.[41] In the years leading up to the Council, the growing dispute over Arius' doctrine had been conducted largely through the bad-tempered

[36] Eus., *Ep. Caes.* 7 (Opitz, *Urk.* 22, 44.4–7). Constantine's success is evident in the fact that only two bishops refused to sign, and then likely for political rather than theological reasons: H. Chadwick (1960), 'Faith and Order at the Council of Nicaea: A Note on the Background of the Sixth Canon', *HTR* 53.3, 171–95.

[37] Cf. Hanson, *Search*, 162; the concerns over the Marcellan character of the Creed are nicely brought out in M. R. Barnes(1998), 'The Fourth Century as Trinitarian Canon' in L. Ayres and G. Jones (eds), *Christian Origins: Theology, Rhetoric and Community* (London: Routledge), 47–67. Hanson calls the Creed 'nakedly Sabellian': Hanson, *Search*, 171–2.

[38] Parvis, *Marcellus*, 83.

[39] Soc., *H.E.* I.23.8 (Hansen, 70.13–14).

[40] The letter of the council, and Constantine's letters, are preserved in Soc., *H.E.* I.9.

[41] Williams, *Arius*, 236.

exchange of competing biblical proof-texts, and had reached something of a methodological stalemate. If Athanasius' later account of Nicaea has even a semblance of truth, then there was evidently an initial attempt at the Council to articulate a settlement on purely scriptural grounds.[42] The 'Arian' bishops, however, found it so easy to twist whatever biblical passages were put in front of them that the non-scriptural *homoousios* became the only viable option precisely to defend the witness of Scripture. Nicaea discovered the need, in other words, to shape and employ new vocabulary to convey and embody old truths—it discovered the need for a creative and ongoing *theological* enterprise. Continuity with the past could no longer simply be assumed, still less could it be ensured through the mere repetition of familiar scriptural formulae—rather, in Williams's phrase, that continuity had to be 're-imagined and recreated at each point of crisis'.[43] Nicaea was itself a moment of 'episodic reformulation' of the Church's tradition, which bequeathed, in the ensuing decades, a fruitfully problematic reception.

THE EARLY RECEPTION OF NICAEA (TO 381)

Much significant work has already been produced on the gradual emergence of a self-consciously 'pro-Nicene' theology in the decades after Nicaea—and readers seeking a more detailed narrative of these years will find it ably set out in the works of Hanson and Ayres.[44] The following section has a narrower focus, examining some of the explicit appeals to the Nicene Council and Creed in the decades following 325. In presenting this evidence, two arguments will be pursued. Firstly, it will be suggested that Athanasius' ambitious recasting of the idea of 'Nicaea' during the 350s and 360s was a response to the very difficulties that Nicaea itself had created. Secondly, it will be contended that the triumph of this Athanasian polemic of Nicaea's unique authority and sole sufficiency led to the articulation of a number of distinct 'reading strategies', by which Nicaea could remain meaningful as fresh controversies reared their heads. The Council of Constantinople (381), on this account, represents one such attempt to 'confirm' Nicaea precisely by creatively 're-receiving' it.

Although the embarrassing infelicities of Nicaea's creed ensured that it was almost entirely absent from theological debate in the two decades after 325, it did stimulate a fashion for fresh attempts at conciliar creed-making. These new creeds and councils were not understood as a deliberate subversion of Nicaea's unique status, for such a status did not exist. Rather, the assembled bishops were simply trying to do a better job than their forebears had done in

[42] Ath., *Decr.* 19–20. [43] Williams, *Arius*, 237.
[44] Hanson, *Search*, 181–823; Ayres, *Nicaea*, 105–272.

325, by creating texts which, they trusted, more precisely (and less offensively) expressed the character of the relationship between God the Father and God the Son. The Dedication Synod of Antioch (December 340–January 341) is a good example of this kind of activity.[45] About ninety bishops were present at the synod, making it perhaps the largest gathering since Nicaea.[46] These men were, as Hanson puts it, the 'hitherto silent majority'[47]—moderate Origenist bishops who now sought to articulate a superior statement of faith to that of 325. They denied any association with Arius himself (a mere presbyter, after all[48]), gave their creed a higher density of scriptural citations (perhaps suggestive of a desire to repudiate the philosophical 'excesses' of Nicaea), and emphatically condemned the doctrine of the real enemy of orthodoxy, Marcellus.[49] The statement, indeed, was sufficiently nuanced for both Hilary of Poitiers, and Sozomen, later to consider it orthodox.[50]

This growing predilection for creed-making was not limited solely to the 'Eusebian' camp. When the Council of Serdica (343) fractured, amid mutual mistrust and recriminations, into two rival synods, the western assembly (which included Athanasius and Marcellus) quickly set about drawing up a new creed to delineate their position.[51] It is clear that these bishops possessed a (vague) loyalty to Nicaea (in the aftermath of Serdica, Ossius and Protogenes wrote to Julius, Bishop of Rome, to affirm their fidelity to the Nicene council[52]), but their understanding of that loyalty was not sufficiently developed to exclude the possibility of composing further creeds. Indeed, for men like Marcellus, the Serdican Creed may have reflected an attempt to improve upon the Nicene Creed by articulating a more explicit one-hypostasis theology, especially in the light of doctrinal elaborations that Nicaea had not addressed or anticipated.

[45] The exact dating of the Dedication Synod is difficult to reconstruct—here I follow T. D. Barnes (2001), *Athanasius and Constantius: Theology and Politics in the Constantinian Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), 59 and Parvis, *Marcellus*, 160–2. The reception of Nicaea at this synod has recently been ably examined in C. W. B. Stephens (2015), *Canon Law and Episocopal Authority: The Canons of Antioch and Serdica* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

[46] Ath., *Syn*. 25.1; cf. Soz., *H.E.* III.5.2 (who numbers the bishops at 97).

[47] Hanson, *Search*, 290.

[48] Ath., *Syn*. 22.3.

[49] The Dedication Creed is strongly anti-Marcellan (Ath, *Syn*. 23.6), and the confession of Theophronius (one of three other documents associated with the council) pointedly anathematizes Marcellus alongside Sabellius and Paul of Samosata (Ath, *Syn*. 24–5).

[50] Hil., *Syn*. 32–3; Soz., *H.E.* III.5.8. In a conciliatory gesture, the fourth of the Dedication Synod's documents (likely composed a little later than the others) echoed many of Nicaea's anathemas, and left enough space for both a one- and a three-hypostasis theology (cf. Ath, *Syn*. 25; cf. Hanson, *Search,* 291–2).

[51] Theod., *H.E.* II.8.

[52] The letter survives as a fragment: H. C. Brennecke, U. Heil, A. von Stockhausen, and A. Wintjes (2007), *Athanasius Werke*, III.1: *Dokumente zur Geschichte des Arianischen Streites* (Berlin: de Gruyter), 231; cf. L. W. Barnard (1983), *The Council of Serdica, 343 A.D.* (Sofia: Synodal Publishing House), 85–93; H. Hess (2002), *The Early Development of Canon Law and the Council of Serdica* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 105–7.

The earliest reception of Nicaea, then, was characterized, both among 'Eusebian' and 'Athanasian' parties, by a willingness to *replace* the Nicene Creed with fresh formulae, which were seen in various ways as improvements upon the unsatisfactory text of 325. However, as the Nicaea-inspired passion for creed production continued, not only did the credal texts themselves become increasingly tortuous and convoluted (such as the interminable 'Creed of the Long Lines' of 344) but problems of conciliar authority also began to appear. The fiasco at Serdica, for instance, was largely precipitated by a clash of competing narratives of authoritative conciliar activity. For the western synod, the earlier Council of Rome had pronounced Athanasius and Marcellus innocent, reversing the verdicts of Tyre and Constantinople—the two bishops were thus to be received into communion. For the eastern synod, Athanasius and Marcellus remained under the legitimate judgements of Tyre and Constantinople (which were regarded, far more than Nicaea, as the venerable touchstones of authoritative pronouncement[53]), and so they could play no part in conciliar proceedings. Neither side could reasonably retreat from this position: the west could not allow the decision of the Council of Rome to be called into question, and the east could not allow any new council to proceed, lest they be seen as implicitly recognizing Athanasius' and Marcellus' legitimacy. Lacking any decisive means to arbitrate the dispute, the conciliar machinery had ground to a halt. A resolution to the impasse would require the articulation of a more developed account of conciliar tradition, according to which the status of particular councils could be persuasively delineated.

The 350s compounded the problem still further, ushering in a bewildering 'labyrinth'[54] of councils and creeds, as competing ecclesiastical parties sought to lend authority to their particular agendas through conciliar process and credal promulgation, amidst the growing fragmentation of the 'Eusebian' theological tradition. The proliferation of councils made it increasingly problematic to claim a special authority for any one gathering—the 'inflation' of conciliar authority only served to diminish the currency's value.[55] In this context, a particular creed's authority became increasingly derived not from the council at which it was composed, but through an appeal to genealogical descent from a venerable credal tradition—the fourth document associated with the Dedication Synod (341), for example, became the basis for the Creed of the Long Lines (344), the Sirmium Creed (351), and the Sirmium 'manifesto' (357).

[53] See, for instance, the attempts to enhance the conciliar authority of Tyre and Constantinople in the eastern synod's encyclical: Hil., *CaP* A.4.1.12–13.

[54] Soc., *H.E.* II.41.17 (Hansen, 178.20–1).

[55] For instance, in 353 Liberius, Bishop of Rome, justified ignoring an eastern ruling against Athanasius simply on the grounds that an Egyptian synod (which had naturally come to the opposite conclusion), had more bishops present (Hil., *CaP* A.7.2).

Constantius' position as sole emperor from 353 reintroduced a significant imperial dynamic into conciliar activity. Through the councils of Arles (353) and Milan (355), and unrelenting pressure on key individuals (such as Liberius and Ossius), Constantius sought energetically to re-establish unity in the Church. The culmination of these efforts, at the great twin council of Selucia-Rimini (359) suggests the continued influence of Nicaea as a model for conciliar activity and credal production, even though the intention was entirely to extinguish and replace the Nicene council. Thus, like Constantine at Nicaea, Constantius sought to bring peace to the Church by promulgating a vaguely worded creed, capable of broad interpretation, through an imperially convened oecumenical council.[56] Of course, the events of Serdica had taught him about the need to separate the eastern and western gatherings from the outset, to circumscribe carefully their agendas, and to shepherd their proceedings more closely;[57] but we nonetheless glimpse here an essentially 'Nicene' solution to some of the problems that Nicaea itself had set in train.

It is notable, moreover, that whilst adherence to Nicaea was evident at both Seleucia and Rimini as a strategy for resisting the emperor's new document (the so-called 'Dated Creed'), these appeals remained conceptually underdeveloped. At Seleucia, most of those who sought to deviate from the imperial script opted instead to rally behind the authority of the Dedication Creed (341);[58] whilst at Rimini, it appears that many bishops were content to abandon Nicaea partly because they were open to the argument, made by Valens and the imperial party, that the Dated Creed could suffice as an alternative 'cypher' for the theological emphases that they wished to safeguard.[59] After all, the problem with the proposed 'Dated Creed' was not so much its homoian vocabulary (Athanasius himself had used such language to denote essential likeness[60]), but rather its prohibition of *ousia* terminology, which recalled the notorious 'Blasphemy' of Sirmium (357). Thus, once Valens'

[56] Constantius had even initially planned for the eastern delegation to meet at Nicaea (Soz., *H.E.* IV.16.1). Moreover, Constantius ensured that the episcopal attendance at his council would be even larger than that of Nicaea—there were about 160 bishops at Seleucia (Soc., *H.E.* II.39.5; Soz., *H.E.* IV.22.1), and around 400 bishops at Rimini (Ath., *Syn.* 8.1; Sulp., *Chron.* II.41.2). Western bishops later had to refute claims that Rimini's size made it more authoritative than Nicaea: D. H. Williams (1995), *Ambrose of Milan and the End of the Arian–Nicene Conflicts* (Oxford: Clarendon Press), 36.

[57] Rimini in particular became notorious for the various strategies of deceit and compulsion employed. See, for instance: Sulp., *Chron.* II.45.2; Soz., *H.E.* IV.19.6; Soc., *H.E.* II.37.90; Valens appears to have misleadingly renounced his 'Arian' opinions, in a ploy to win over some of the wavering bishops: Hil., *CaP* B.8.2.2; Sulp., *Chron.* II.44.7–8; Jerome, *Alt. Luc.* 18.

[58] Soz., *H.E.* IV.22.7f.

[59] Cf. Ayres, *Nicaea*, 161. There were evidently appeals to Nicaea at Rimini (see, for instance, the 'Definition' of the Council: Hil., *CaP* A.9.1–3; also Ath., *Syn.* 10.3), but, as Williams convincingly argues, a clear pro-Nicene 'party' did not begin to crystallize in the Latin west until the early 360s: Williams, *Ambrose*, 7–8, 12–18, 35–7.

[60] For instance: Ath., *C. Ar.* I.20.1, III.11.2.

testimony and the emperor's assurances removed much of the suspicion surrounding this prohibition, the Dated Creed could be regarded (with a bit of squinting) as in accordance with Nicaea. The bishops, as Jerome put it, 'were not anxious about the name [Nicaea], as long as that which it implied was secured', and they were thus persuaded that they could find in the Dated Creed the 'ring of piety'.[61]

By the end of the 350s, then, it is a complex picture that emerges. Nicaea had inaugurated an enthusiasm for creed-making which encouraged the proliferation of fresh attempts to define orthodoxy—whether through laborious precision, or, in the case of the Dated Creed, through prohibiting contested technical vocabulary entirely, and retreating to a pious biblicism.[62] After attempts (on all sides) during the 340s to replace the Nicene Creed with something more satisfactory, the 350s witnessed the growth of (albeit underdeveloped) appeals to Nicaea as possessing a special status. Direct engagement with the Nicene Creed, however, remained limited,[63] and those keen to affirm 'Nicaea' often did so (as at Rimini) as a cypher for their own particular theological convictions.[64] Moreover, the sheer number of councils and creeds increasingly provoked questions about the nature of conciliar and credal authority. Constantius had attempted a 'Nicene' solution (the enforcement of a single creed through oecumenical councils involving both the West and the East), but despite possessing an impressive set of 'objective' external credentials (conciliar size, geographical representativeness, imperial endorsement), Rimini and Seleucia failed to secure widespread and enduring consent.

Attempts to articulate alternative solutions to the problem of conciliar authority were proving similarly unpersuasive. Basil of Ancyra, for instance, sought to locate orthodoxy not in a single creed or theological slogan (not even, ultimately, his beloved *homoiousion*), but in a tradition—a golden thread of councils whose proceedings were legitimate, whose theology was

[61] Jerome, *Alt. Luc.* 17 (Canellis, 44.7). In Sozomen's account of the first session of Rimini, there appears to have been a formal reading-out of various credal statements, in order to assess their orthodoxy (Soz., *H.E.* IV.17.6–7). The implication seems to be that while the 'Nicene doctrines' were accorded a special status, this did not prevent the recognition of the theological validity of other creeds.

[62] In claiming that only scriptural language should be affirmed, the Dated Creed was turning its back on decades of doctrinal endeavour, and instead embracing a kind of compulsory theological ignorance (cf. Hil, *Syn.* 10). It should be noted that, at the time, the strategy did not even satisfy the creed's own drafting committee, since both Valens and Basil of Ancyra appended clarifying remarks with their signatures—Valens signalled his dislike of the term 'like *in all respects*', whilst Basil listed further examples of that likeness (Epiph., *Pan.* 73.22.6–7). Constantius' attempted alliance between the *homoian* and *homoiousion* parties was thus unstable from the start.

[63] This was especially true in the West. Hilary of Poitiers famously claimed not to have heard the Nicene Creed publically recited before his exile in 356 (Hil., *Syn.* 91).

[64] I here follow Ayres—see, for instance, L. Ayres (2004), 'Athanasius' Initial Defence of the Term *Homoousios*: Rereading the *De Decretis*', *JECS* 12.3, 337–59.

consistent, and which avoided both Marcellan Sabellianism and Anomean ultra-subordinationism.[65] Specifically, this consisted of Constantinople 336, Antioch 341, eastern Serdica 343, and Sirmium 351.[66] By selecting councils which had explicitly condemned Marcellus (or his pupil Photinus),[67] by omitting Nicaea, and by anathematizing the *homoousion*,[68] Basil thus articulated a narrative of conciliar authority opposed to the Nicene legacy and rooted in the moderate Eusebian tradition of Antioch 341.[69]

Later in 358 (at Sirmium), Basil modified his narrative, pushing the start of his conciliar genealogy back to Antioch 268 (Paul of Samosata's condemnation).[70] As well as implicitly rooting Marcellus' heresy in Paul's (alleged) Sabellianism, this seems to reflect a 'battle for tradition', based on priority in time. Against those who emphasized that Nicaea predated Constantinople 336, Basil could now point to how Antioch 268 (with its explicit rejection of the *homoousion*) preceded Nicaea! But Basil's strategy seems to have been decisively rejected by his own party at Seleucia. There, in opposing the imperial agenda, the Homoiousion majority dispensed with an essentially genealogical approach in favour of advocating a single, unique locus of authority—the Dedication Creed of Antioch. This creed, they argued, was uniquely sufficient, because it expressed the faith of the fathers.[71] Moreover, it is doubtful whether Basil's selection of councils would ever have convinced a wider audience—it left no room for Homoian or Homoousion theologies, and by affirming eastern Serdica was never going to commend itself to the west. Basil's struggles, then, reveal the difficulties inherent in any attempt to construct a coherent 'genealogy of orthodoxy' from the chaotic conciliar and credal history of the preceding two decades, especially at a time when many sought to find a single locus for conciliar and credal authority (whether Nicaea, Antioch 341, or the Dated Creed).

[65] At a small synod that convened in Ancyra in 358: see Epiph., *Pan.* 73.11.11; Hanson, *Search*, 349.

[66] Basil's Letter from the Ancyran Synod (Epiph., *Pan.* 73.2.2). Basil had probably been present at Antioch 341 (Parvis, *Marcellus*, 260), and had certainly been present at eastern Serdica, since western Serdica had excommunicated him (Parvis, *Marcellus*, 262).

[67] Basil claims he chose Constantinople 336 on account of Marcellus (Epiph., *Pan.* 73.2.2), and many of the anathemas are directed against him (e.g. Epiph., *Pan.* 73.10.6; cf. 73.9.7).

[68] Epiph., *Pan.* 73.11.10 (nineteenth anathema).

[69] Indeed, Basil seeks to claim seeks exclusively for his own party the entire Eusebian synodical tradition, cf. W. A. Löhr (1993), 'A Sense of Tradition: the Homoiousion Church Party', in M. R. Barnes and D. H. Williams (eds), *Arianism after Arius: Essays on the Development of the Fourth Century Trinitarian Conflicts* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark), 88.

[70] Soz., *H.E.* IV.15.2; Löhr, 'Homoousion', 88.; cf. Hil., *Syn.* 81 (where Hilary notes that the *homoousios* was opposed on the grounds that it was rejected by those who condemned Paul of Samosata in 268).

[71] Soc., *H.E.* II.39.19–20, II.40.25; Soz., *H.E.* IV.22.9.

With this context in mind, it is now necessary to focus more precisely on Athanasius' influential construal of the authority and sufficiency of Nicaea, which became increasingly prominent from the late 350s onwards.

Athanasius' earliest references to Nicaea had appealed only to its judgements, as part of a strategy to undermine the moral authority of those who had presumed to judge him.[72] Nicaea was a great council not because it was alone authoritative, but because its rulings (unlike those of his enemies' assemblies) were just.[73] Indeed, when Athanasius came to defend his own reputation in the *Apologia Secunda*, he did so not by affirming doctrinal conformity to Nicaea but on the basis of his vindication by more recent councils, about whose size he boasts: nearly a hundred bishops at Alexandria (338), more than fifty at Rome (341), and more than three hundred at western Serdica (343).[74]

Athanasius' *De Decretis* (*c.*353[75]) represents a shift in Athanasius' strategy, largely in response to attacks on Nicaea's unscriptural language.[76] Athanasius elevates Nicaea's status by depicting its bishops as 'blessed fathers'[77], and places the council within a polarized narrative: Nicaea's decisions convey the 'sound and ecclesiastical faith'[78] of the 'catholic church',[79] whereas the 'variable and fickle' Arians change 'as chameleons in their colours'.[80] The Nicene Creed's *ousia* language is justified as a necessary defence against the evasions of the whispering and winking Arians. Athanasius also makes an important hermeneutical move: what appear to be 'strange phrases' in the Nicene Creed are actually the 'expression of religious thoughts'.[81] As with biblical texts, a pious man will be able to look beyond the words themselves to the underlying intent, and so perceive that the *homoousion* truly reflects 'the sense of the Scriptures'.[82] However, as Ayres has shown, Athanasius' commitment to the *homoousion* is not all that it seems—in fact, he not only subordinates it to the more fundamental Nicene phrase 'from the *ousia* of the Father', but uses

[72] For instance: Ath., *Apol. Sec.* 7.2–3.

[73] The wider shifts in Athanasius' position are nicely traced in Sieben, *Konzilsidee,* 25–67.

[74] Ath., *Apol. Sec.* I.2. Athanasius also seeks here to enhance the authority of western Serdica by reference to it being assembled by imperial command—it is only from the time of his *Arian History* (*c.*358) that he took a much less positive view of imperial involvement in conciliar activity (for instance: Ath., *H. Ar.* 33, 52).

[75] A precise dating of *De Decretis* is impossible, and a wide range of possibilities have been suggested—I tentatively follow Ayres (who agrees with Barnes) in placing it around 353 (Ayres, 'Defence', 338), against the earlier dating of T. A. Kopecek (1979), *A History of Neo-Arianism* (Cambridge, MA: Philadelphia Patristic Foundation), 116–17, and the later dating of Hanson, *Search*, 438.

[76] Athanasius does not mention the *homoousion* before *De Decretis*, other than a brief reference in *C. Ar.* I.9.

[77] Ath., *Decr.* 27.5 (Opitz, 24.12).

[78] Ath., *Decr.* 3.2 (Opitz, 3.8).

[79] Ath., *Decr.* 27 (Opitz, 24.11–12).

[80] Ath., *Decr.* 1.2 (Opitz, 1.14). Athanasius' arguments in *Decr.* 21–5 seek to show that the Nicene terms were not innovations.

[81] Ath., *Decr.* 18.4 (Opitz, 15.30).

[82] Ath., *Decr.* 20.2 (Opitz, 6.6).

both terms as mere 'cyphers' for his own theological emphasis, which centres on a distinctive interpretation of the Son as 'Word', 'Wisdom', and 'from God'.[83] Furthermore, whilst the Nicene Creed is regarded as a valuable defence against the Arian heresy, it is not yet understood as the only means by which doctrinal truth can be secured.

In seeking to counter Constantius' conciliar policy at Arles and Milan, the *Epistula ad Episcopos Aegypti et Libyae* (356) represents a further development in Athanasius' rhetorical approach. Constantius' agenda is construed as a deliberate attempt to 'cast a shade over the Council of Nicaea, and the confession of faith which was then put forth'.[84] Athanasius' use of standard heresiological tropes to contrast unchanging truth with pluriform error is also sharpened: the 'uncorrupt, pure and oecumenical council' of Nicaea[85] is in this way opposed to the suspicious meetings of the unorthodox, from which pour forth incessant credal innovations.[86] Indeed, anticipating the argument of *De Synodis*, orthodoxy is defined in terms of 'the faith we have received from the fathers, which they who assembled at Nicaea recorded in writing'.[87] The implication, not fully elaborated, is that Nicaea is authoritative not simply because it enshrines the wise opinions of venerable bishops, but because it expresses the true faith, divine and unchanging. Thus, to defend the Nicene Creed is to protect the faith which St Paul told Timothy to guard, and to suffer for 'the confession which was framed by the fathers at Nicaea' is to be a 'martyr'.[88] Nonetheless, the increasingly exalted role for Nicaea still runs alongside the acknowledgement of other authoritative councils, such as 'the great synod of Serdica'.[89]

It is only with *De Synodis* (late 359, plus additions 360/1) that Nicaea is emphatically construed as the *sole* locus of conciliar authority, and so as the only antidote to the chaotic multiplication of councils and creeds (which, unlike Nicaea, declare a faith that 'dates not from of old, but now'[90]). Athanasius found it necessary to sharpen his argument in the light of Constantius' twin councils of Seleucia and Rimini, which in size, oecumenical scope, and imperial status threatened to surpass Nicaea. Thus, as well as claiming that Nicaea's own composition and agenda were truly catholic,[91] and that Seleucia

[83] Ayres, 'Defence', *passim*. [84] Ath., *Ep. Aeg. Lib.* 5.3 (Metzler/Savvidis, 44.14–15).
[85] Ath., *Ep. Aeg. Lib.* 7.2 (Metzler/Savvidis, 46.5–6).
[86] For instance, Ath., *Ep. Aeg. Lib.* 6.1, 7.2.
[87] Ath., *Ep. Aeg. Lib.* 8.1 (Metzler/Savvidis, 47.5–6).
[88] Ath., *Ep. Aeg. Lib.* 21.1 (Metzler/Savvidis, 61.1–2,5).
[89] Ath., *Ep. Aeg. Lib.* 7.4 (Metzler/Savvidis, 46.17).
[90] Ath., *Syn.* 3.2 (Opitz, 232.28–9). Unfortunately for Athanasius' lampooning of the 'Dated Creed', the Nicene Creed too bore a consular date.
[91] For instance: Ath., *Syn.* 5.1–3, 33.2 (the reference to Nicaea's consideration of Easter was probably another attempt to demonstrate a wider 'catholic' agenda for the council). Athanasius remains reluctant to emphasize the involvement of Constantine at Nicaea (perhaps in case it requires him to afford a similar recognition to Constantius), unlike the pro-Nicenes at Rimini (cf. their letter at Ath., *Syn.* 10.3).

and Rimini represented a nefarious plot against that council,[92] Athanasius depicted Nicaea as the chosen vehicle for divine truth. For, at Nicaea, what the fathers 'wrote down was no discovery of theirs, rather it is the same as was taught by the apostles',[93] and 'even before Nicaea that [Arian] heresy was held in detestation'.[94] In other words, Nicaea did not participate in the erroneous innovations of the Arian councils, because it merely declared a truth that had always been known. Indeed, the Nicene Creed was uniquely sufficient not only against the Arian heresy, but against all heresies.[95] Nicaea rendered all subsequent councils and creeds unnecessary, for there God had definitively spoken words of unchanging truth.[96]

Such a construal of conciliar authority was profoundly at odds with the genealogical approach of Basil of Ancyra: rather than finding truth in a succession of councils, Athanasius focused solely on Nicaea. The other major councils of the last two decades were unsuitable for Athanasius' purposes either because they had condemned him personally (such as Antioch 341 or Sirmium 351) or because they would be rejected by the Homoiousion party (such as western Serdica), whose good will he now wished to court. Thus *De Synodis* depicts every synod other than Nicaea in the same way: as an attempt by the heretical conspiracy of Arians to redefine the faith,[97] demonstrating their disregard not only for the tradition of the fathers but also for their own previous efforts.[98] Athanasius does present a select genealogy of theological statements, but it is to show the evidence of error repeated, not truth preserved.[99] Athanasius' construal of Nicaea's unique authority was, nonetheless, vulnerable to the fact of the rejection of *homoousios* by earlier fathers (both at Antioch 268 and by Bishop Dionysius, Athanasius' illustrious predecessor). Here Athanasius (echoing Hilary's argument), maintained that Dionysius, the bishops of 268, and the bishops of 325 were *all* 'fathers',[100] whose apparently contradictory statements hid a deeper truth (the underlying 'sense of the fathers'[101]). In this way, even 'the three hundred' of Nicaea 'laid down nothing new', but simply 'fell back upon fathers'.[102]

[92] Ath., *Syn.* 1.4, 7.3, 9.1. [93] Ath., *Syn.* 5.3 (Opitz, 234.12–13).
[94] Ath., *Syn.* 20.3 (Opitz, 247.10). [95] Ath., *Syn.* 6.1; *Ep. ad Epict.* 1.
[96] Ath., *Syn.* 43.3; *Ep. Afr.* 2.1–3, 4.1–3, 9.1. [97] For instance, Ath., *Syn.* 14.3.
[98] For instance, Ath., *Syn.* 7.1.
[99] Viz. Jerusalem 335, Antioch 341 (all four 'creeds'), the Creed of the Long Lines 344, Sirmium 351, Sirmium 357, and the Dated Creed (its versions at Seleucia 359, Nike/Constantinople 359–60, and Antioch 361).
[100] Ath., *Syn.* 43.2–4.
[101] Ath., *Syn.* 48.1 (Opitz, 272.19); cf. 45.3 (Opitz, 269.34–7): 'if the fathers of the two councils made different mention of the *homoousion*, we ought not in any respect to differ from them, but to investigate their meaning, and this will fully show us the agreement of both the councils'. This appears to be the application of a principle transferred from scriptural exegesis.
[102] Ath., *Syn.* 43.3 (Opitz, 268.25–7).

Athanasius' strategy succeeded in forging a way ahead. By advocating a single authoritative council (whose authority derived less from its particular circumstances than from the orthodox faith it enunciated[103]), he offered a reassuringly simple interpretation of the foregoing profusion of councils and creeds (they were all Arian!), and reaffirmed the tradition of the church as *semper eadem*. By emphasizing that the Nicene Creed could be understood according to the pious intent that lay behind its particular terminology, he made the use of the Creed as a rallying point for orthodoxy more palatable to a wider range of theological opinion (such as the Homoiousion party).[104] Athanasius' strategy offered a persuasive account of a contested and confusing past—it was a construal of 'Nicaea' intended to remedy the tensions that Nicaea had itself, at least in some degree, bequeathed.

Athanasius thus set down a compelling idea of 'Nicaea', which quickly gained adherents—but the *Monopolstellung* that Nicaea began to establish from the early 360s onwards was far from straightforward or monolithic.[105] Athanasius' passionate advocacy of Nicaea's unique authority soon brought problems in its wake. For instance, the settlement that Athanasius sought to achieve at Alexandria (362)—traditionally lauded as 'the rallying point from which the Nicene faith advanced to its final and decisive victory'[106]—involved a series of subtle 're-readings' of the Nicene past.

In order for the Nicene Creed to be affirmed as alone sufficient (all subsequent creed-making having been construed, in *De Synodis*, as intrinsically Arian), the earlier creed of western Serdica (343) was now rather awkwardly restyled as a mere draft document, which an unrepresentative minority of bishops had composed in the shadows before being indigantly rebuked by the rest of the council.[107] Fairbairn has recently tried to exonerate Athanasius from deceit in this matter, by suggesting that the text of the Serdican creed has in fact been lost, and that the Serdican document preserved by Theodoret is rather an 'extended commentary' on the Nicene Creed that was endorsed by the council.[108] Thus, for

[103] The convening of the twin councils of Rimini and Seleucia undermined any claim that could be made to Nicaea's superiority based on purely numerical terms. Athanasius was clearly irked by those who emphasized that Rimini alone had more bishops present than were at Nicaea: Ath., *Ep. Afr.* 2.

[104] As in Athanasius' *Tomus* of 362. In addition to requiring subscription to the Nicene Creed, Athanasius includes a condemnation of Sabellius and Paul of Samosata, to prevent accusations of the Creed on either ground (Ath., *Tom.* 3).

[105] *Contra* Sieben, *Konzilsidee,* 232–42 *passim*; cf. a similar tendency in A. de Halleux (1985), 'La réception du symbole oecuménique, de Nicée à Chalcédoine', *ETL* 61.1, 5–47.

[106] The assessment of C. B. Armstrong (1921), 'The Synod of Alexandria and the Schism at Antioch in A.D. 362', *JTS* o.s. 22.3, 214.

[107] This is the tortuous argument of Ath., *Tom.* 5. The text of the creed of western Serdica is preserved in Theod., *H.E.* II.8, and Sozomen independently refers to the bishops of western Serdica writing a new doctrinal statement, longer than that of Nicaea (Soz., *H.E.* III.12).

[108] D. M. Fairbairn (2015), 'The Sardican Paper, Antiochene Politics and the Council of Alexandria (362): Developing the Faith of Nicaea', *JTS* 66.2, 651–78, esp. 644–5.

Fairbairn, the (lost) creed of western Serdica was indeed rejected, as Athanasius insisted in 362, and the text that the bishops did compose in 343 (which Theodoret quotes) was not intended as a replacement for Nicaea, but was merely an exposition of its authoritative teaching. However, Fairbairn's theory relies upon the anachronistic retrojection of a later, more developed, understanding of Nicaea's uniqueness, back into the conciliar activity of 343.[109] It seems far more likely that western Serdica deemed that the best means for securing the Nicene faith was the composition of a creed that improved, in a number of ways, upon the text of 325—but that by 362 this strategy of Nicene fidelity *through replacement* was at odds with the new Athanasian polemic of the total sufficiency of the Nicene Creed's terminology.

In addition to necessitating a hasty reshaping of the Nicene past, Athanasius' pro-Nicene strategy also required the articulation of a 'reading strategy' for the text of the Creed itself. The tactical recognition at the Alexandrian synod that those who preferred a 'three hypostases' formula might be orthodox in intention required the Creed's synonymous use of *ousia* and *hypostasis* to be quietly sidelined.[110] Also problematic was the need to condemn those who, 'while pretending to cite the faith confessed at Nicaea, venture to blaspheme the Holy Spirit'.[111] The Nicene Creed's pneumatological content was, of course, extraordinarily meagre, and yet the Alexandrian council emphatically declared that 'the writing from the great Council of Nicaea means these things: the Son is consubstantial with the Father, and the Spirit is jointly glorified with the Father and the Son'.[112] In his later *Epistula ad Afros*, Athanasius developed the point further: 'this synod of Nicaea is in truth a proscription of every heresy, it also upsets those who blaspheme against the Holy Spirit, and call him a creature, for the fathers, after speaking of the faith in the Son, straightaway added, 'and we believe in the Holy Ghost'.[113] Athanasius' affirmation of Nicaea's textual sufficiency required him to argue that the Nicene Creed had, in fact, solved all subsequent doctrinal questions in advance. The Creed needed no supplementation, but rather a 'reading strategy' which discovered in its brief words a fully developed Trinitarian theology.

[109] Moreover, Eusebius of Vercelli's signature to the 362 *Tomus* rather lets the cat out of the bag. He writes that the Serdican document should now be considered to possess no authority, lest it appear that the Nicene Creed require supplementation (Ath., *Tom.* 10)—the implication being that this was a retrospective 'downgrading' of the Serdican text.

[110] Ath., *Tom.* 5–6. Athanasius repeatedly slurs over this anathema when quoting it (e.g. Ath., *Decr.* 20.5–6; *Syn.* 40).

[111] Ath., *Tom.* 3 (*AW* II.8, 343.5–6).

[112] Ath., *Ep. Cath.* 8 (Tetz, 272): *Ταῦτα γὰρ καὶ τὸ τῆς μεγάλης συνόδου τῆς ἐν Νικαίᾳ γράμμα βούλεται· Ὁμοούσιον εἶναι τῷ Πατρὶ τὸν Υἱόν· καὶ τὸ Πνεῦμα, τῷ Πατρὶ, καὶ τῷ Υἱῷ συνδοξάζεσθαι.*

[113] Ath., *Ep. Afr.* 11.1 (*AW* II.8, 338.6–9); for similarly exalted language with regard to Nicaea's unique authority see Ath., *Ep. Afr.* 2.3, 4.3; *Ep. Epict.* 1; *Ep. Jov.* 1.5.

Alexandria 362 involved, in short, a significant new 're-reception' of Nicaea.[114] Athanasius' strong emphasis upon Nicaea's unique authority and sufficiency helped to reshape the idea of the Nicene council into a powerful symbol of ecclesial unity, and allowed the Nicene Creed to 'speak' effectively into new controversies. However, his strategy of creative fidelity rested upon an uneasy combination of textual flexibility (abandoning the Creed's insistence on one *hypostasis* in the divine) and textual fixity (asserting that all the answers were already present in the original words).

The dilemma soon arose, however, of competing (and mutually incompatible) interpretations of Nicaea. In both *Ad Epictetum* and *Ad Jovianum*, for instance, Athanasius had to contend against those who 'pretended' to confess Nicaea, but in fact denied its teaching.[115] The greater the authority that Nicaea was said to possess, the more important it became to distinguish clearly an appropriate 'reading' from an inappropriate one. Athanasius' solution was simply to apply to the Creed the same hermeneutical strategy that he used in the interpretation of biblical texts, namely, that the pious man will be able to read the Creed correctly, for he will be able to look beyond the words themselves to their underlying intent (*σκοπός*), and so grasp their true meaning.[116] The truly religious reader will thus interpret particular details of the credal text (which may, on a plain reading, appear unremarkable or even unpalatable) according to the deeper set of theological assumptions from which those details proceed. Paradoxically, then, treating the Creed with a quasi-scriptural authority not only acted to fix the text as something complete and inviolable, but also opened up a potentially fruitful 'reading' strategy that allowed doctrinal weaknesses or omissions in the text to be ignored or circumvented, through appeal to the deeper *σκοπός*. Cyril, who self-consciously positioned himself as the follower of Athanasius, would further develop this strategy in his writings against Nestorius.

We can also detect, however, an alternative strategy for 're-receiving' Nicaea being increasingly articulated during the 370s: that of *necessary supplementation*. Rather than following Athanasius' emphasis on Nicaea's absolute sufficiency, this position acknowledged (albeit reluctantly) the textual inadequacy of the Creed in the light of fresh controversies, and thus the need for further statements of expansion or clarification. This desire for supplementation may have been further encouraged by the seemingly impeccable fidelity to the

[114] Fairbairn prefers to see Alexandria 362 as 'one of the monuments' in the 'process of development' of Nicene orthodoxy (Fairbairn, 'The Sardican Paper', 678), but there is an implicit teleology here—it seems preferable to see the council as one instance of creative 're-reception' among many varied (and somewhat opposed) attempts in the late fourth century to express the continuing authority of Nicaea creatively.

[115] Cf. Ath., *Ep. ad Jov.* 1.6; *Ep. ad Epict.* 3.

[116] For instance: Ath., *Decr.* 18.4, 20.2; for Athanasius' appeal to the textual *σκοπός*, see Wessel, *Cyril*, 113–37.

'mere' words of the Nicene Creed by men, such as Apollinarius, whose doctrine was increasingly viewed with suspicion.[117]

Basil of Caesarea, for instance, was insistent on the unique role of Nicaea as the guarantor of orthodoxy, but also acutely aware that the Creed was becoming a refuge for the heterodox.[118] Recognizing that the followers of Marcellus appealed to the synonymous use of *ousia* and *hypostasis* in the Creed's anathemas, Basil stated that, in fact, the blessed fathers of Nicaea had regarded these two words as entirely distinct—there being three *hypostases* and one *ousia* in the Godhead.[119] As well as importing a later terminological refinement back into the text of 325, Basil here put forward an interpretation of the Creed that was in direct contrast to Athanasius' more tolerant 362 settlement (where the affirmation of either one or three *hypostases* was to be regarded as in harmony with Nicaea, and the delicate question of the anathemas was avoided). Basil's strategy here shows how Nicaea could be 're-received' in ways that not merely closed down interpretive possibilities but actually advanced, as alone authentically 'Nicene', positions far removed from the 'plain meaning' of the credal text.

Nicaea's pneumatology also raised interpretive difficulties for Basil. Here, he readily recognized the Creed's paucity of content, but was also keen to avoid suggesting that its teaching was thereby fundamentally inadequate. It was a tricky balance to strike, as this slightly tortuous statement demonstrates: 'We can add nothing to the Creed of Nicaea, not even the slightest thing, except the glorification of the Holy Spirit, and this only because our fathers mentioned this topic cursorily, since the question regarding him had not yet been raised at that time'.[120] Epiphanius of Salamis, similarly, found it necessary in his *Ancoratus* not only to cite the Nicene Creed but then to provide an extended creed which fleshes out its Christological and pneumatological content, in response to heresies that had subsequently emerged.[121] Interestingly, although

[117] Apollinarius' resolute loyalty to Nicaea is evident from his second letter to Basil of Caesarea (Basil, *Ep.* 364).

[118] For his emphasis on the need for a common adherence to Nicaea, and to no other formulary, see Basil, *Ep.* 92.3.

[119] Basil, *Ep.* 125.1 (*c.*373). Basil quotes the text of the Nicene Creed in full in this letter (*Ep.* 125.2). See the brief but instructive analysis of: A. de Halleux (1991), 'Towards a Common Confession of Faith according to the Spirit of the Fathers', in S. M. Heim (ed.), *Faith to Creed: Ecumenical Perspectives on the Affirmation of the Apostolic Faith in the Fourth Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans), 29–31.

[120] Basil, *Ep.* 258.2 (Courtonne, III, 101:15–103:20; cf. Kinzig, *Formulae*, I, 478): *οὐδὲν δυνάμεθα τῇ κατὰ Νίκαιαν πίστει προστιθέναι ἡμεῖς, οὐδὲ τὸ βραχύτατον, πλὴν τῆς εἰς τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ Ἅγιον δοξολογίας, διὰ τὸ ἐν παραδρομῇ τοὺς Πατέρας ἡμῶν τούτου τοῦ μέρους ἐπιμνησθῆναι· οὔπω τοῦ κατ' αὐτὸ ζητήματος τότε κεκινημένου.* See also Basil, *Epp.* 51, 125, 140, 159. Amphilochius of Iconium makes a similar argument in his *Epistula synodalis* 2 (see Kinzig, *Formulae*, I, 489).

[121] Epiphanius, *Anc.* 118–19. There is now a strong consensus that the Greek text of ch. 118 represents a later editorial interpolation, with the Constantinopolitan Creed (381) being inserted to replace what was originally the Nicene Creed—see, for instance: R. K. Young (2017), 'Nicaea is Not Enough: The Second Creed of Epiphanius' *Ancoratus*', *SP* 96, 11–20.

Basil judged that supplements with regard to the Holy Spirit were necessary, he disapproved of Epiphanius' Christological expansions: 'as to the additions concerning the incarnation of the Lord being proposed to that faith [i.e. by Epiphanius], we have neither tested nor accepted them, as being beyond our comprehension. We know that, once we interfere with the simplicity of the faith, we will find no end to that discussion, contradiction ever leading us on and on'.[122]

Here, then, the acknowledgement of Nicaea's unique sufficiency was accompanied by an awareness of the contingencies of its historical context. Unlike Athanasius, who was content to regard Nicaea as a mere enunciation of unchanging truth (and so instrumentalized and de-historicized it[123]), Basil and Epiphanius recognized that the form of the Creed had been shaped by the particular concerns facing the bishops in 325. The controversy over the Holy Spirit came later, and thus the Nicene Creed needed updating—not so that its content might be changed, or its unique status undermined, but rather so that 'the same good teaching of our fathers who assembled at Nicaea might shine out again'.[124]

The strategy of Nicaea's persuasive 're-reception' through necessary supplementation also seems to lie behind the genesis of the statement of faith associated with the Council of Constantinople (381). Though the elevation of this document to a privileged 'oecumenical' status is a retrospective judgement of Chalcedon (451), and the precise circumstances of its composition remain highly conjectural, it appears to embody another attempt to restate the sole authority of Nicaea, in a fresh context, by means of a little further explanation.[125] The Constantinopolitan Creed thus significantly expands the material on the Holy Spirit, includes a reassuringly anti-Marcellan line ('his kingdom shall have no end'), and dispenses with the Nicene anathemas (whose use of *hypostasis* had become embarrassing).[126] In this way, the faith of Nicaea was 'confirmed'[127] *not* through a 'mere' repetition of the original Creed's (now inadequate) terminology, but rather through a new text that

[122] Basil, *Ep.* 258.2 (Courtonne, III, 103:20–5; cf. Kinzig, *Formulae*, I, 478–9): 103:20–5; cf. Kinzig, *Formulae*, I, 478–9): *Τὰ δὲ προσυφαινόμενα τῇ πίστει ἐκείνῃ δόγματα περὶ τῆς τοῦ Κυρίου Ἐνανθρωπήσεως, ὡς βαθύτερα τῆς ἡμετέρας καταλήψεως οὔτε ἐβασανίσαμεν οὔτε παρεδεξάμεθα, εἰδότες ὅτι, ἐπειδὰν τὴν ἁπλότητα τῆς πίστεως ἅπαξ παρακινήσωμεν, οὔτε τι πέρας τῶν λόγων εὑρήσομεν ἀεὶ τῆς ἀντιλογίας εἰς τὸ πλεῖον ἡμᾶς προαγούσης.*

[123] Cf. R. B. Eno (1976), 'Pope and Council: The Patristic Origins', *Science and Esprit* 28.2, 193.

[124] Basil, *Ep.* 91 (Courtonne, I, 198:33–5): *ἀναλάμψειε δὲ ἡ ἀγαθὴ τῶν Πατέρων ἡμῶν διδασκαλία, τῶν συνελθόντων κατὰ τὴν Νίκαιαν* [. . .].

[125] Cf. Hanson, *Search*, 791–823; for a thorough summary of debates regarding the origin of the Constantinopolitan Creed, see Kelly, *Creeds*, 296–331. Ritter's thesis, that the Constantinopolitan text was a compromise document drafted during negotiations with the Macedonians, and then subsequently filed away in the archives when those negotiations collapsed, remains the most compelling account of its genesis: A. M. Ritter (1965), *Das Konzil von Konstantinopel und sein Symbol* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht).

[126] For the text of the Creed, and its earliest witnesses, see Kinzig, *Formulae*, I, 506ff.

[127] Soc., *H.E.* V.8.1; Soz., *H.E.* VII.7.1.

better expressed and elucidated that same faith. Similarly, both the emperor Theodosius' statements before the council, and the synodical letter of 382 preserved by Theodoret, set their full-blooded affirmation of fidelity to Nicaea within a far more developed ('pro-Nicene') Trinitarian theology for which Nicaea had become a cypher.[128] It was in these dense and nuanced theological contexts that Nicaea was now being read and received—so that, in this way, the 'spirit' of 325 could be affirmed, and the teaching of its 'fathers' retained as a meaningful expression of orthodoxy.

The conceptual plasticity of the idea of 'Nicaea' was further aided by the flexible use of *πίστις* terminology. Although *πίστις* (like *σύμβολον*) could be used explicitly to refer to a credal document, it could also encompass the wider catholic 'faith', and so transcend a specific textual referent.[129] Indeed, such linguistic flexibility allowed a range of local baptismal creeds, subsequently enriched with distinctive Nicene vocabulary, to be understood as expressing the 'faith of Nicaea' during the late fourth century, despite their textual differences from the Nicene Creed itself.[130] Of course, the growing association of the Nicene faith with baptism further enhanced Nicaea's authority, making it almost synonymous with the very mysteries of salvation.[131]

In this way, then, Constantinople 381 represents a further creative 're-reception' of Nicaea in a new context. However, the tendency to decouple the articulation of the Nicene faith from the precise wording of the text of 325, which Constantinople embodied, remained vulnerable to the charge of addition or innovation. Gregory Nazienzen appears to be alluding to the Constantinopolitan document when he laments that, at the council, the Nicene Creed had been 'wretchedly befouled with briny infusions poured into it by double-minded men'.[132] A similar accusation is preserved in a pseudo-Athanasian dialogue (*c.*380–400):

MACEDONIAN: Have you not added to the creed of Nicaea?
ORTHODOX: Yes, but nothing that contradicts it.
MACEDONIAN: Still, you have added.[133]

[128] See especially *CTh* 16.1.2 (Kinzig, *Formulae*, III, 317–8); *CTh* 16.5.6 (Kinzig, *Formulae*, III, 320–1); *CTh* 16.1.3 (Kinzig, *Formulae*, III, 322–3); Theod., *H.E.* V.9; cf. Ayres, *Nicaea*, 251–60.

[129] Cf. *PGL*, 1083–7.

[130] Cf. F. J. A. Hort (1876), *Two Dissertations* (Cambridge: Macmillan); Kelly, *Creeds*, 181–204; V. H. Drecoll (1996), 'Wie nizänisch ist das Nicaeno-Constantinopolitanum?', *ZKG* 107, 1–18.

[131] The authors of the Constantinopolitan synodical letter of 382, for instance, explicitly link the Nicene faith to the faith of baptism: Theod., *H.E.* V.9.

[132] Greg. Naz., *De vita sua*, 1703–11 (Kinzig, *Formulae*, I, 507)—I quote here the whole section: *τὴν γλυκεῖαν καὶ καλήν πηγὴν παλαιᾶς πίστεως, ἣ τριάδος εἰς ἓν συνῆγε τὴν σεβάσμιον φύσιν, ἧς ἦν ποθ᾽ ἡ Νικαία φροντιστήριον, ταύτην ἑώρων ἁλμυραῖς ἐπιρροαῖς τῶν ἀμφιδόξων ἀθλίως θολουμένην, οἳ ταῦτα δοξάζουσιν, οἷς χαίρει κράτος, μέσοι μὲν ὄντες—ἀσμενιστὸν δ᾽ εἰ μέσοι, καὶ μὴ προδήλως κλήσεως ἐναντίας* [. . .].

[133] Ps.-Ath., *De Sancta Trinitate* 3 (*PG* 28, 1204:17–19): *Μακ. Ὑμεῖς γὰρ οὐ προσεθήκατε τῇ ἐν Νικαίᾳ; Ὀρθ. Ἀλλ᾽ οὐκ ἐναντία αὐτῇ. Μακ. Ὅλως προσεθήκατε.*

By the close of the fourth century, in short, the widespread acceptance of the Athanasian idea of Nicaea had stimulated two distinct methods for creative 're-reception', which affirmed Nicaea's unique authority but also sought to ameliorate the growing textual inadequacy of the Creed in the light of subsequent doctrinal debates. The first of these 'reading strategies', found in Athanasius' later work, was to exalt the pure text of 325 as sacrosanct and entirely sufficient—the pious reader, for Athanasius, would thus be able to discern in the Creed's brief words all the treasures of orthodoxy. The second strategy (embodied, for instance, by the Constantinopolitan document), involved a more explicit acknowledgement of the historical situatedness of the council of 325, and so the need for the supplementation of its text in order to preserve and elucidate the Nicene faith amid fresh controversies. This decoupling of the Nicene faith from the precise wording of the Nicene Creed, however, required careful expression if it was to avoid being portrayed as being unfaithful to Nicaea by undermining its unique status. We witness in the later fourth century, then, not a steady and progressive 'development' of Nicaea's authority, but a series of distinct attempts at Nicene 're-reception' which sought, in different ways, to secure Nicaea's continued utility and relevance.

THE IDEA OF NICAEA ON THE EVE OF EPHESUS

The central tenets of Athanasius' idea of Nicaea would come to define the shared rhetorical landscape of the bishops who gathered at Ephesus: orthodoxy was synonymous with fidelity to Nicaea, and heterodoxy with Nicaea's betrayal. We have seen already, however, that behind the repeated assertions of Nicaea's unique authority and sole sufficiency lay a far more complex discursive situation, in which 'Nicaea' was variously understood and articulated. In this way, 'Nicaea' was less a solid touchstone than a malleable tool, shaped differently according to changing contexts. It was the source of a problem for the articulation of orthodoxy, yet also the very catalyst by which creative new ways of 'reading' the Nicene tradition were stimulated. This conceptual plasticity enabled the textual inadequacy of the Nicene Creed to be (at least partially) overcome, while allowing continuity with the Nicene past to be proudly reasserted.

Moreover, as we have noted above, the flexible use of *πίστις* terminology in a documentary context allowed for the proliferation of locally adapted 'Nicene' statements of faith. This textual flexibility 'on the ground' helped Nicaea to be assimilated to a range of new environments. At the council of Seleucia-Ctesiphon (410), for example, the (hitherto largely unknown) Nicene Creed was formally acknowledged by the gathered Persian bishops as expressive of the orthodox faith, but its form was subtly modified. The article on the Father

was extended, and an extra statement was inserted that the Holy Spirit was one in essence and will with the Father and the Son.[134] Yet this document was still regarded as *the* Nicene Creed, suitably adapted for local use—the adaptations, in this sense, were not indicative of a departure from Nicaea, but precisely as the means by which 'Nicaea' could rightly be heard in a new context.

By the early fifth century, however, this kind of Nicene fluidity 'from below' was increasingly in tension with the hardening rhetorical emphasis upon the uniqueness of Nicaea itself. The relative obscurity of the actual proceedings of 325 (no *acta* having been transmitted) had facilitated the growth of a series of legendary tropes concerning the council—the fewer the known historical facts, the more easily 'Nicaea' could be moulded into the image of the ideal council, at which orthodoxy triumphed and heresy was defeated.[135] So, for instance, the number of 'fathers' present at Nicaea became set at 318, which recalled the scriptural account of Abraham's servants (Gen. 14:14), and was thus suggestive of continuity with the biblical past, and of the special providence of God.[136] The ascription of the work of Nicaea to the guidance of the Holy Spirit (which can be traced back to Constantine himself) gradually imbued the Nicene Creed with a quasi-scriptural status, as the Spirit-inspired textual expression of the true faith.[137] Similarly, St John's grave prohibition against adding or subtracting from the words of Scripture (Rev. 22:18–19) became increasingly applied to the Nicene Creed.[138] Sozomen, indeed, was so conscious of the Creed's sacred aura that he explicitly avoided reproducing its text in his *History*.[139]

Alongside this focus on the sufficiency of Nicaea's credal text, there was also a growing concern for clarity regarding the precise form of the Nicene documentation. The unique authority of Nicaea, after all, was understood as extending not only to the council's creed but also to its canons—they were given, for instance, a special priority at the First Council of Toledo (400),

[134] Cf. P. Bruns (2000), 'Bemerkungen zur Rezeption des Nicaenums in der ostsyrischen Kirche', *AHC* 32, 1–22; A. Vööbus (1972), 'New Sources for the Symbol in Early Syrian Christianity', *VC* 26, 91–6.

[135] On the lack of knowledge about the council of Nicaea, see for instance: J. Voelker (2013), 'Marius Victorinus' Remembrance of the Nicene Council', *SP* 67, 217–26. On the rise of legendary stories about Nicaea, see: Lim, *Disputation*, 182–216.

[136] The figure of 318 was first ascribed to the council by Hilary of Poitiers (*Syn.* 86), and was then adopted by Athanasius (*Ep. Afr.* 2). Ambrose appealed to the special number in order to argue that Nicaea was greater than the (numerically superior) councils of Seleucia-Rimini (*De Fide*, 1.*proem*.5). See more generally: M. Aubineau (1966), 'Les 318 serviteurs d'Abraham et le nombre des Pères au concile de Nicée (325)', *RHE* 61.1, 5–43.

[137] For Constantine's pneumatological ascription see Soc., *H.E.* I.9.24.

[138] For instance, *ACO* I.2, 9:2–7 (CV.2.7).

[139] Soz., *H.E.* I.20.3. By the late fifth century, the text of the Creed (in its Constantinopolitan form) even appears to have been worn as a kind of magical amulet, to ward off evil spirits: G. H. R. Horsley (ed.) (1981), *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity: A Review of the Greek Inscriptions and Papyri Published in 1976* (North Ryde, N.S.W.: Macquarie University), 103–4.

whose own canons were shaped to echo those of 325.[140] This legal-canonical reception of Nicaea, however, raised significant problems during the early fifth century, as significant discrepancies between different texts of the Nicene canons came to light.

Thus, at the Council of Carthage (419), the assembled bishops protested that they could nowhere find in their records the canons which Pope Zosimus had quoted as Nicene.[141] Unbeknown to Zosimus, Roman scribes had, eighty years before, directly appended the canons of western Serdica (343) to their text of the Nicene canons, so that, over time, those later canons had come to be treated as originating from the great council of 325.[142] As Merdinger has demonstrated, this error was eagerly exploited by the north African bishops, as part of their wider attempt to demonstrate a degree of independence from the see of Rome—loyalty to the true text of Nicaea, they insisted, must trump the orders of the Pope.[143]

The bishops then sent out requests to Constantinople, Alexandria, and Antioch to provide the true version of the Nicene documents from their respective archives, so that Rome's position could be further undermined.[144] Cyril wrote back, attaching 'the truest copies of the authentic synod at Nicaea', including the canons as 'underneath . . . the confession of our faith'.[145] For Cyril, to possess the uncorrupted text of the Nicene canons (and creed) did not merely demonstrate careful record-keeping, but was also indicative of a deeper fidelity to the orthodox tradition, just as to pass on a false text was to transmit an erroneous substitute for the genuine deposit of faith. Cyril's claim to have the 'truest copies' of Nicaea thus represented an attempt to make himself the living guarantor of the Nicene faith—this concern for the 'pure text' of Nicaea would come to be central in his later polemic against Nestorius. Indeed, the Nestorian controversy would prove so problematic partly because it exposed the tension between the conceptual fluidity of the 'Nicene faith' and the rhetorical (and legal-canonical) insistence on the validity of the 'pure text' alone.

[140] A. Weckwerth (2004), *Das erste Konzil von Toledo: philologischer und kirchenhistorischer Kommentar zur Constitutio concilii* (Münster: Aschendorff), 84.

[141] *Acta*, 25 May 419, in C. Munier (ed.) (1974), *Concilia Africae A. 345–525* (*CCSL* 149), 91:72–7.

[142] The transmission history is complex; see C. H. Turner (1902), 'The Genuineness of the Sardican Canons', *JTS* 3, 370–97; F. L. Cross (1961), 'History and Fiction in the African Canons', *JTS* n.s. 12, 227–47.

[143] See especially J. E. Merdinger (1997), *Rome and the African Church in the Time of Augustine* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press), ch. 8.

[144] *Acta*, 25 May 419, in C. Munier (ed.) (1974), *Concilia Africae A. 345–525* (*CCSL* 149), 91:78–86.

[145] Cyril, *Ep.* 85 (Joannou, I.2, 423:9–16): *τὰ ἀληθέστατα ἴσα τῆς ἐν τῇ Νικαέων μητροπόλει τῆς Βιθυνίας αὐθεντικῆς συνόδου τὰ παρὰ τῶν ἁγίων πατέρων ὁρισθέντα καὶ βεβαιωθέντα ὑποκάτω τῆς ὁμολογίας τῆς ἡμετέρας πίστεως τῇ ὑμετέρᾳ ἀγάπῃ ἡμᾶς ἀποστεῖλαι* [. . .]. This may suggest that the textual form in which the proceedings of Nicaea were preserved in Alexandria involved the text of the creed followed by the canons.

Several of these themes are evident in the most significant 'reading' of the Nicene Creed on the eve of the Nestorian controversy: that of Theodore of Mopsuestia.[146]

Firstly, a reconstruction of the text of Theodore's Creed from the scattered quotations in his catechetical homilies reveals that his 'Nicene Creed' was neither the pure text of 325, nor the Creed associated with Constantinople 381, nor the version that Nestorius possessed.[147] It was, rather, yet another variant form that was nonetheless regarded by Theodore as embodying and transmitting the pure Nicene faith, and as possessing Nicaea's unique authority. Theodore even re-construed the original intentions of the bishops of Nicaea in order to make the Creed more relevant to his own catechetical audience: those wise fathers, he claimed, deliberately kept the clauses of the Creed short, precisely to aid liturgical memorization.[148]

Furthermore, it is evident from the document presented at the Ephesine session of 22 July 431 that Theodore was also in the habit of composing longer quasi-credal 'expositions', in order to provide a fuller account of the Nicene faith.[149] This textual flexibility demonstrates how, for Theodore, Nicaea's authority could be extended beyond the wording of the Creed itself to include further Christological statements that he understood as implicit in it.

Secondly, Theodore was aware (like the author of the pseudo-Athanasian dialogue) that subsequent additions had been made to the Creed. He acknowledged that the Nicene fathers had written only briefly on the Holy Spirit ('for they thought that this would be sufficient for the ears of the period'), and that a later synod had added a more complete pneumatology.[150] Like the second 'reading strategy' outlined above, then, Theodore accepted that the contribution of the fathers of Nicaea had been historically conditioned by the Arian controversy, and so, when new doctrinal questions were raised, supplementations to their teaching were necessary.[151] Theodore also strove, however, to retain the standard trope of Nicaea's sufficiency: for 'men of good will', he argued, it was clear that the fathers of Nicaea 'taught us sufficiently concerning

[146] In what follows, direct quotations from the text are given with reference both to the Syriac critical edition: R. Tonneau and R. Devreesse (eds) (1949), *Les homélies catéchétiques de Théodore de Mopsueste* (Vatican: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana); and to the English translation: A. Mingana (ed.) (1932), *Commentary of Theodore of Mopsuestia on the Nicene Creed* (Cambridge: Heffer).

[147] J. Lebon (1936), 'Les anciens symbols dans la définition de Chalcédoine', *RHE* 22, 835–40; S. Gerber (2000), *Theodor von Mopsuestia und das Nicänum: Studien zu den katechetischen Homilien* (Leiden: Brill), 108–58. Like the Constantinopolitan Creed, Theodore's Creed did not include the Nicene anathemas, likely because of its liturgical use.

[148] Theodore, *Hom. cat.* 1.13, 6.3.

[149] *ACO* I.1.7, 97–100 (CA.76.4–11).

[150] Theodore, *Hom. cat.* 9.1 (Tonneau/Devreesse, 215; Mingana, 93); cf. Ritter, *Konstantinopel*, 153–4. Theodore's remarks are not evidence of his knowledge of the Constantinopolitan Creed, since his credal text differs from it, and additions that he claims were made at the later synod do not correspond with it (such as the addition of 'and in *one* Holy Spirit', *Hom. cat.* 9.16).

[151] Theodore, *Hom. cat.* 9.2, 9.14.

the nature of the Holy Spirit'.[152] The later bishops ('the heirs of the first blessed fathers'), provoked by the confusion stirred up by the Pneumatomachi, had then 'made manifest the truth of their faith, and interpreted also their mind', so that, by the 'addition of short words', they were able to 'to confirm the true doctrine of the church'.[153]

Although the two themes of Nicaea's necessary supplementation and original sufficiency are held in somewhat uneasy tension in Theodore's account, his 'reading strategy' nonetheless marks an advance on Basil's earlier construal. For Theodore, the subsequent additions to the Creed ultimately represented a fresh elucidation of the 'mind' of the fathers of 325, so that the one Nicene faith, precisely by being contextually re-received, was authentically confirmed. The contribution of subsequent generations was thus acknowledged, whilst the priority of the Nicene fathers was retained. As we shall see, Theodore's insights would, via Theodoret's *Adlocutio*, be reutilized three decades later in the justification of the Chalcedonian Definition—something of a secret victory for a man whose theological legacy Cyril (and his followers in 451) had sought so ferociously to negate!

Thirdly, Theodore's reading of the Creed demonstrates that his flexible construal of what the 'Nicene faith' involved did not thereby make him cavalier about the precise wording of the text. On the contrary, Theodore paid close attention to the minutiae of the credal vocabulary, believing that, like Scripture itself, every word was endowed with profound meaning.[154] Just as Cyril would come to follow Athanasius' *σκοπός*-centred exegesis of the Creed, Nestorius would imitate Theodore's concern for exegetical exactitude.

So, for instance, Theodore attributed great significance to the wording at the start of the Creed's second article: 'And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, the first-born of all creatures'.[155] 'Jesus Christ' was here interpreted as a compound subject, comprising distinctly both divinity and humanity: 'our blessed fathers who assembled in that wonderful council of the catholic church first spoke, like Paul, of divine nature, while coupling with it a word which denotes the form of humanity which He took upon Him'.[156] Theodore then used this distinction as the hermeneutical key for interpreting the subsequent credal statements, allowing him to apportion some to the

[152] Theodore, *Hom. cat.* 9.14 (Tonneau/Devreesse, 235; Mingana, 100). There is an echo here of Athanasius' emphasis on the pious intent of the reader being necessary for correct interpretation.

[153] Theodore, *Hom. cat.* 9.14–16 (Tonneau/Devreesse, 235–9; Mingana, 100–1).

[154] On the strong Antiochene concern for 'precision' (*ἀκρίβεια*) in scriptural exegesis, see A. M. Schor (2007), 'Theodoret on the School of Antioch: A Network Approach', *JECS* 15.4, 530–2; R. C. Hill (1981), 'Akribeia: A Principle of Chrysostom's Exegesis', *Colloquium* 14, 32–6.

[155] Theodore, *Hom. cat.* 3.1 (Tonneau/Devreesse, 55; Mingana, 35). This is another deviation in Theodore's credal text—neither the Nicene Creed nor the Constantinopolitan Creed has 'the first-born of all creatures'.

[156] Theodore, *Hom. cat.* 3.3 (Tonneau/Devreesse, 57–9; Mingana, 36).

divine nature, and others to the human nature, so ensuring that the Creed could comfortably be read as a cypher for his own preferred Christological emphases. Significantly too for the later controversy, Theodore noted that, on his reading, the Creed did not support the use of the appellation 'Theotokos'—an interpretive step that Nestorius would enthusiastically follow.[157]

It is worth noting, however, that Theodore's particular 'reading' of the Creed was not without its weaknesses. To take one example, by attributing the first 'coming' to the divine Son, and the second 'coming' to the man assumed, Theodore was unable to explain the 'again' in 'He shall come *again* to judge the living and the dead'—since, for Theodore, the two comings were associated with two different referents![158]

To conclude, by the eve of the Nestorian controversy the idea of 'Nicaea' was both a central, but also a deeply problematic, element in the articulation of orthodoxy. The triumph of the Athanasian polemic had elevated as solely sufficient a Creed whose text was entirely inadequate to inform subsequent doctrinal debates, and had established as uniquely authoritative a council whose identity had been de-historicized and instrumentalized. It had led to a quasi-scriptural insistence that there should be no addition to, and no subtraction from, Nicaea's sacred text, which was increasingly at odds with the variety of local 'Nicene' creeds, and with the conceptual plasticity of appeals to the Nicene *πίστις*. The idea of 'Nicaea' thus threatened either entirely to inhibit any subsequent refinement of orthodox doctrine, or to be rendered meaningless by becoming a conveniently bland cypher under whose branches every theological opinion could comfortably find shade. These significant tensions in the idea of 'Nicaea' would be dramatically exposed in the conflict between Nestorius and Cyril, and would be fatefully transferred to a conciliar context at Ephesus.

However, it was also noted that these problems stimulated the fashioning of creative strategies of 're-reception' that sought to distinguish a faithful interpretation of Nicaea from a false one, and thus ensure that an old Creed could make a meaningful contribution to new discussions. Two such strategies have been identified. The first approach retained a straightforward affirmation of Nicaea's complete sufficiency, and appealed to the Creed's underlying *σκοπός* as providing the hermeneutical key by which the meaning of particular words or phrases within it could be rightly discerned. The second approach recognized the need for the Creed to be updated and supplemented, but (especially in Theodore) construed this as the means by which the same unchanging

[157] Theodore, *Hom. cat.* 6.3. Theodore elsewhere conceded that, if balanced with 'Anthropotokos', the use of 'Theotokos' was permissible: Theodore, *De incarn.* fr. 15 (H. B. Swete (1882), *Theodori episcopi Mopsuesteni in epistolas beati Pauli commentarii* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), II, 310, 314); and Nestorius later did the same (see Chapter 3).

[158] Theodore, *Hom. cat.* 7.13–14; F. A. Sullivan (1956), *The Christology of Theodore of Mopsuestia* (Rome: Pontifical Gregorian University Press), 243.

Nicene faith could be authentically established in a fresh context. Theodore, moreover, also demonstrated how an exegesis of the Creed could proceed through precise verbal examination of the text, rather than through a broader appeal to its *σκοπός*.

Both of these strategies, of course, remained vulnerable to critique: the first could appear entirely to rest upon an author's arbitrary and self-serving construal of the Creed's *σκοπός* rather than upon what the text actually said, while the second could be accused of advocating addition to the Creed, and thus violating the shibboleth of Nicaea's sole sufficiency. Even so, such approaches demonstrate that the idea of 'Nicaea' not only acted to problematize orthodox discourse, but was also capable of generating fruitful reflection upon it.

3

The Idea of Nicaea in the Two Councils of Ephesus (431)

The Nestorian controversy has been variously construed: as fundamentally concerned with the propriety of 'Theotokos' (and thus pictured as a clash between traditional piety and philosophizing abstraction); or with the number of natures in Christ (a clash between Antiochene and Alexandrian Christologies); or with the rivalry for ecclesial supremacy (a clash between the Alexandrian and Constantinopolitan sees); or with the politics of the imperial court (a clash between Pulcheria and Theodosius); or with the personal enmity of two flawed men (a clash between the high-handed Nestorius and the dogmatic Cyril).[1]

Yet it will be contended that these interpretations tend to overlook a central part of the controversy, as if it were hidden in plain sight: the Nestorian controversy was a dispute over the correct interpretation of the Nicene Creed. It is the question of the true meaning of Nicaea that triggered the initial dispute in Constantinople, that dominated the ensuing correspondence between Cyril and Nestorius, and that would become the rallying cry of Cyril, Nestorius, and John of Antioch. Such an analysis helps to explain, moreover, why both the Cyrillian and Eastern councils at Ephesus were so focused upon the authoritative articulation of the faith of Nicaea and the corresponding demonstration of their opponents' failure to confess it aright.

Moreover, as argued in Chapter 2, this was not a trivial quibbling over words, a matter of arcane scholarship or exegetical pettifogging. Rather, it was a contest over the very character of that unchanging orthodox faith with which 'Nicaea' had become synonymous. The Nestorian controversy thus threw the idea of Nicaea centre stage, exposing and exacerbating existing tensions in the construal of Nicene orthodoxy, and raising profound questions regarding how God had spoken through His church in the past, and how continuity with that

[1] The centrality of 'Theotokos' has been decisively refuted: R. M. Price (2004), 'Marian Piety and the Nestorian Controversy', *SCH* 39, 31–8; Schwartz's account over-privileges the political dimension: E. Schwartz (1928), 'Cyril und der Mönch Viktor', *SBAWPH* 208.4, 1–51; while Holum grants too much weight to Pulcheria: K. G. Holum (1982), *Theodosian Empresses: Women and Imperial Dominion in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press).

divine truth was to be maintained in the present. Indeed, the dispute about Nicaea represented something of a 'civil war' within orthodoxy, a fateful curving-inward of the tradition upon itself, in which, on all sides, the battle was waged on the basis of same text and against the same perceived enemy.[2] Indeed, both Cyril and Nestorius ended up fashioning rhetorical stances that were the mirror image of one another: the defender of Nicaea against its betrayer; the heir of Athanasius against the heir of Arius; the follower of the fathers against the lover of innovation and lies.

The Nicene Creed had also, in a more directly theological sense, set the context for the Christological questions that both Cyril and Nestorius strove to address. The focus of the Creed's original authors had, of course, been the radical affirmation of the divine consubstantiality of the Son with the Father, and to this had been added, in a rather perfunctory manner, some meagre and entirely unambitious statements about the Incarnation. The Nicene Creed had not been intended to make a contribution to Christological thought. Nonetheless, when approached with this perspective in mind, the very brevity and bluntness of the human predications (he was made man, he suffered) only served to heighten the scandalous paradox that these experiences were (in some sense) understood to be true of the uniquely divine Son of God. The fact that Apollinarius had been able to advance his distinctive Christology while also maintaining a fervent loyalty to the Nicene Creed, however, demonstrated that the text did not provide a single uncontested 'answer' to this problem—still less a fully developed Christological model.

The central dilemma of the Nestorian controversy was that in spite of these inadequacies, the Nicene Creed, as the all-sufficient touchstone of orthodoxy, had to be shown to contribute *something*—indeed, more than that, it had to be shown to rule clearly and decisively on the respective merits of the conflicting doctrinal positions at hand. However, other than the mere imposition of the imperial will, or the violent coercion of the mob, there were few means to arbitrate convincingly between these rival Nicene interpretations.[3] At the same time, the rippling-out of the Nestorius–Cyril polemic, encouraged by the unusually rapid and widespread circulation of written material,[4] not only entrenched positions and deepened enmities but also stimulated fresh and creative reflection on the meaning of 'Nicaea', and so helped to fashion new discursive tools for articulating Nicene orthodoxy.

[2] Cf. R. L. Wilken (1965), 'Tradition, Exegesis, and the Christological Controversies', *CH* 34, 123–45.

[3] Perhaps partly for this reason we discover a marked increase in violence, and the threat of violence, during the mid-fifth-century councils: M. Gaddis (2005), *There is No Crime for Those Who Have Christ: Religious Violence in the Christian Roman Empire* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press), 282–322.

[4] Cf. T.Graumann (2004), 'Distribution of Texts and Communication Networks in the Nestorian Controversy', *SEA* 90, 227–38.

We turn firstly, then, to analyse the strategies employed by Nestorius and Cyril in shaping their own distinctive ideas of Nicaea in the lead-up to Ephesus.

THE IDEA OF NICAEA IN THE CONFLICT BETWEEN CYRIL AND NESTORIUS

It has been commonly assumed that it was Cyril's entry into the controversy that raised the role of Nicaea to real prominence. Wessel, for instance, makes the rhetorical use of Nicaea in these years a fundamentally Cyrilline project.[5] Yet it was Nestorius who first rooted his position in an appeal to Nicaea, and so determined the ground upon which the ensuing dispute would be waged. Crucially, Nestorius' reading of the Creed, building on elements of Theodore's hermeneutical strategy, would prove difficult for Cyril and his allies to refute decisively—*not* because Nestorius offered an inherently superior exegesis of the Creed (far from it), but because the 'bare' credal text, as it stood, revealed itself to be inadequate as a means to demonstrate that Nestorius' position was straightforwardly heretical.[6]

Nestorius' fervent concern for fidelity to Nicaea, then, was not simply a rhetorical device deployed in the dispute over 'Theotokos', but rather conditioned his entire outlook from the beginning of his time in Constantinople. As soon as Nestorius arrived in the city (having perhaps visited the dying Theodore en route[7]), he immediately launched a 'war against heresies'—a war pursued, indeed, in explicitly Nicene terms.[8] Nestorius strenuously persecuted the Arians (ordering the Arian chapel in Constantinople to be torn down), and targeted the Macedonians by forcing them to accept the Creed of Nicaea.[9] He similarly attacked the Quartodecimans of Asia Minor (another group condemned in 325), and demanded their reconciliation via a lengthy exposition of the Nicene Creed.[10]

[5] Wessel, *Cyril*, 112ff.

[6] Wickham's sweeping remark that Nestorius' position was simply 'incredible' thus misses the point: L. R. Wickham (1983), *Cyril of Alexandria: Select Letters* (Oxford: Clarendon Press), xix. Wickham may indeed provide an accurate *theological* judgement, but the *historical* difficulty was in demonstrating persuasively that the Nicene Creed, as the universally acknowledged ultimate arbiter of such matters, was incompatible with such an interpretation.

[7] Evagrius, *H.E.* I.2. The source is late, but may contain a kernel of truth, since John of Antioch was aware that Nestorius had known Theodore personally: *ACO* I.1.1, 94–5 (V.14.3).

[8] N. P. Constas (2003), *Proclus of Constantinople and the Cult of the Virgin in Late Antiquity* (Leiden: Brill), 52; cf. Socrates, *H.E.* VII.29.5.

[9] Socrates, *H.E.* VII.29.8–12, 31.1–16, cf. *ACO* I.1.1, 32 (V.5.8).

[10] *ACO* I.1.7, 96–105 (CA.76.2–32); cf. F. Millar (2004), 'Repentant Heretics in Fifth-Century Lydia: Identity and Literacy', *SCI* 23, 111–30. Of course, the very fact that a further 'exposition' of the Creed was necessary to delineate Nestorius' account of the Nicene faith precisely shows

It is thus entirely unsurprising that when controversy soon arose over the appellation 'Theotokos', Nestorius should have sought to define his position on the basis of the Nicene Creed. Nestorius' hard-line supporters (notably Anastasius and Dorotheus) had rashly condemned the use of 'Theotokos', and had suggested 'Anthropotokos' in its place. This may partly have been driven by a fear of quasi-pagan 'mother goddess' language (Nestorius himself was certainly aware of this danger[11]), but the primary concern seems to have been that 'Theotokos' involved the inappropriate predication of human attributes to the Godhead, and so threatened to blur the characteristic Theodoran distinction of the two natures in Christ.[12]

In response, Nestorius portrayed himself as the great Nicene bridge-builder (perhaps in a deliberate echo of Athanasius' efforts in 362[13]): one could confess *both* 'Theotokos' *and* 'Anthropotokos' (thus balancing the human and divine attributions); or, better still, one could confess 'Christotokos', which more precisely identified the one whom Mary bore. For Nestorius, this position was plainly evident from the Nicene Creed itself, the grammar of which made clear that the name given to the one born of Mary was 'Jesus Christ'. Nestorius could claim, on this basis, that he was no innovator or enemy of tradition, but was simply defending the venerable Nicene faith from a scandalous misinterpretation. He then set about promoting his particular idea of Nicaea with great energy, so that by early 429 his writings were already stirring up trouble in the monasteries of Egypt.[14] The shift of context is significant: 'Nicaea' was now the subject not merely of obscure scholarly reflection or private catechetical instruction, but of public polemic, exposing the question of its correct interpretation to an unparalleled level of attention.

Let us examine, then, Nestorius' particular 'reading' of Nicaea in more detail. The version of the Nicene Creed that Nestorius had before him appears to have been broadly faithful to the text of 325, albeit with some minor variations. We read, for instance, of 'the only-begotten Son, begotten from the Father before all ages', rather than 'the Son of God, begotten from the Father, only begotten'.[15] We read, too, that Christ 'was crucified and was buried'—affirmations absent from the original text.[16] Most notably, Nestorius'

the growing inadequacy of the 'bare' text of 325 to resolve unaided the doctrinal questions being put to it.

[11] F. Loofs (1905), *Nestoriana: Die Fragmente des Nestorius* (Halle: Niemeyer), 353:17–20, cf. *ACO* I.2, 13:17–18 (CV.3.2).

[12] Cf. Socrates, *H.E.* VII.32.2–3.

[13] Cf. L. R. Wickham (1994), 'Nestorius/Nestorianischer Streit', *TRE* 24, 289.

[14] As evident from Cyril's *Epistula ad Monachos*: *ACO* I.1.1, 10–23 (V.1).

[15] *ACO* I.1.1, 29:27f (V.5); *ACO* I.1.6, 27:10–11 (V.166 = *Contra Nest.* I.7); for 'before all ages': Loofs, *Nestoriana*, 285:19–21.

[16] *ACO* I.1.6, 27:8 (V.166 = *Contra Nest.* I.7); cf. the Constantinopolitan form, which has 'he was buried'.

Nicene Creed confessed that Jesus Christ 'became incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary'—distinct from the original text's 'became incarnate', and the Theodoran text's 'became incarnate of the Virgin Mary'.[17] Nestorius' full version of the Nicene Creed thus likely ran as follows:

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty,
maker of all things both visible and invisible;
and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son,
begotten from the Father before all ages, that is, from the substance of the Father;
God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father;
through whom all things came into being, both things in heaven and things on earth;
who for us men and for our salvation descended, became incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, was made human, suffered, was crucified and was buried, on the third day rose again, ascended into the heavens, will come to judge the living and the dead;
and in the Holy Spirit.
Those who say, 'There was when he was not', and 'He was not before he was begotten', and that he came to be from nothing, or those who claim that the Son of God is from another hypostasis or substance, or alterable, or mutable;
these the catholic and apostolic Church anathematizes.[18]

In addition to possessing a slightly different form of the Nicene Creed to Theodore, Nestorius also diverged from his great teacher with regard to the provenance of the text: unlike Theodore, he never acknowledged any history of necessary supplementation to the Nicene Creed, and always treated his text as the sole product of the 'divine choir' of fathers of 325.[19] Nestorius' interpretation of the Creed was, in this sense, a more narrowly focused and 'bare' reading than that of either Theodore or Cyril: Nestorius neither called upon a tradition of subsequent addition to the Creed (as did Theodore) nor did he appeal to the writings of the wider 'fathers' to guide and flesh out his interpretation (as would Cyril). Rather, Nestorius' consistent focus was on the precise wording of the text, and from 428 to 431 he relentlessly propounded his particular exegesis, supremely confident in the accuracy and fidelity of his interpretation.

[17] Loofs, *Nestoriana*, 167:9; 171:12; 286:2; 296:4–5,16–17.

[18] Cf. Lebon, 'Symbols', 840–3. This reconstruction remains somewhat conjectural, both because the *Liber Heralidis* (in which Nestorius provides substantial quotations from the Creed) exists only in a rough and unreliable Syriac translation of the Greek original, and because Nestorius himself sometimes refers to the Creed in paraphrase, or skips over clauses not relevant to his argument; for further analysis see R. H. Connolly (1915), 'Nestorius's version of the Nicene Creed', *JTS* 16 (63), 397–402; and for a recent selection of Nestorius' quotations and allusions to the Creed, Kinzig, *Formulae*, II, 27f.

[19] See, for instance, *ACO* I.1.1, 29:22 (V.5.2); *ACO* I.2, 14:27–30 (CV.4.2).

At the heart of Nestorius' argument, building on Theodore, was the initial statement of the Creed's second article: 'and in one Lord Jesus Christ'. Indeed, Nestorius' exegetical emphasis on this point was sufficient to provoke comment among the clergy in Constantinople: 'God knows, Lord Bishop, before you came we never paid attention to the words of the bishops of Nicaea when they said this'.[20] The significance of 'and in one Lord Jesus Christ' was that it meant that the grammatical subject of the second article was explicitly *not* the Godhead *simpliciter* (the word 'Logos', tellingly for Nestorius, was not employed by the fathers of 325), but was rather a single name ('Jesus Christ') which signified the common *πρόσωπον* of a distinct divine nature and a distinct human nature.[21] The various credal statements that followed could thus be carefully attributed either to the divine nature (e.g. 'God from God') or to the human nature (e.g. 'he suffered'), so preserving the Godhead from any blasphemous suggestion of mutability or passibility, and the manhood from any hint of Apollinarianism. To read the Creed in any other way, Nestorius contended, threatened to confuse humanity and divinity, and so to undermine the very basis of man's salvation.[22]

Nestorius expounded this particular 'reading' of the Creed several times during 428 and early 429—his position was fully formed before Cyril had even entered the fray.[23] In his *First Letter to Celestine*, for instance, Nestorius already portrayed himself as the defender of the teachings of Nicaea against the heretical novelty of the new Arians and Apollinarians, who blended the natures into a single mixture, and who spoke of the consubstantial Logos as taking his beginning from the Virgin.[24] Tellingly, Nestorius identified the fundamental error of his opponents as a failure to attend to the words of the Creed: 'they are not afraid to call her Theotokos, even though the holy fathers of Nicaea, who surpass all praise, said nothing more about the Holy Virgin than that our Lord Jesus Christ was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary'.[25] The

[20] Loofs, *Nestoriana*, 378: 24–7 (frag.264c, in Syriac), following the translation of Lebon, 'Symbols', 844, fn. 2. The exclamation follows directly from Nestorius' insistence on the words 'one Lord Jesus Christ' (fragment 246b), although Loofs's arrangement of the fragments somewhat obscures this, cf. M. Santer (1971), 'ΕΚ ΠΝΕΥΜΑΤΟΣ 'ΑΓΙΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΜΑΡΙΑΣ ΤΗΣ ΠΑΡΘΕΝΟΥ', *JTS* 22.1, 165 fn. 3.

[21] For instance: *ACO* I.2, 14:27–33 (CV.4.2); Loofs, *Nestoriana*, 295:2–296:9.

[22] On this concern, cf. P. Gavrilyuk (2003), '*Theopatheia*: Nestorius's main charge against Cyril of Alexandria', *SJT* 56.2, 190–207.

[23] This represented both a strength and a weakness of Nestorius' argument: though commendably consistent in advancing his Nicene interpretation, there is little evidence that Nestorius sought to adapt or improve it in the light of Cyril's critique. Nestorius' supreme confidence in his 'reading' of the Creed made him far less fleet-of-foot than Cyril over the course of their polemical exchanges.

[24] *ACO* I.2, 13:17–18 (CV.3.2).

[25] *ACO* I.2, 13:18–21 (CV.3.2): hanc enim theotocon vocantes non perhorrescunt, cum sancti illi et supra omnem praedicationem patres per Nicaeam nihil amplius de sancta virgine dixissent nisi quia dominus noster Iesus Christus incarnatus est ex spiritu sancto et Maria virgine.

straightforward absence of 'Theotokos' from the text of the Nicene Creed was thus for Nestorius another powerful argument against its propriety.[26]

In his *Second Letter to Celestine*, Nestorius hammered the same point home: 'Blind they are, who do not even remember the teaching of those holy fathers that clearly proclaims to them, We believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, became incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary'.[27] This is no invitation to consider a hidden subtext or subtle nuance in the Creed, still less to perceive a deeper *σκοπός*: Nestorius simply bids his enemies open their eyes, and see what the Creed 'clearly' teaches.

Nestorius' earliest sermons in Constantinople reveal precisely the same reading strategy. Indeed, the fathers of Nicaea are understood (in an illuminating case of psychological projection!) as being as obsessed with precision as Nestorius himself:

> we must learn that the Synod of Nicaea nowhere says that God the Logos was born of Mary, for it said, 'We believe in one God the Father Almighty and in one Lord Jesus Christ'. Observe that having first put the word 'Christ', which is the indication of the two natures, they did not say, 'in one God the Word', but took the name that signifies both, in order that when lower down you hear of death, you do not think it strange; in order that the words 'crucified' and 'buried' may not strike the ear as though the Godhead suffered these things.[28]

Nestorius similarly appealed to the exact wording of the Creed to prove that there was not a 'double begetting' of the Word, for, he argued, the fathers of Nicaea did not say that Jesus Christ was 'begotten' of the Holy Spirit, but 'enfleshed'.[29]

In short, then, Nestorius had chosen to take his stand on an appeal to Nicaea, presenting himself as the true defender of the Nicene faith, and as the faithful exegete of the Nicene Creed. This polemical strategy profoundly conditioned the nature of the growing controversy, and ensured that the idea of 'Nicaea' (and the underlying tensions for the articulation of orthodoxy that it embodied) would come under unprecedented scrutiny. Nestorius had fashioned, moreover, a distinctive interpretation of the Creed, which

[26] Nestorius was sufficiently shrewd not to condemn 'Theotokos' entirely, acknowledging that it was just about tolerable if very carefully parsed: *ACO* I.2, 13:30–3 (CV.3.2).

[27] *ACO* I.2, 14:27–30 (CV.4.2): caeci, qui nec sanctorum illorum patrum expositionem meminerunt, aperte ad eos reclamantem: credimus in unum dominum Iesum Christum, filium dei, incarnatum ex spiritu sancto et Maria virgine.

[28] Loofs, *Nestoriana*, 295:2–12: *τὴν κατὰ Νίκαιαν σύνοδον μαθεῖν οὐδαμοῦ τολμῶσαν εἰπεῖν ὅτι θεὸς λόγος ἐγεννήθη ἐκ Μαρίας· ἔφη γὰρ ὅτι πιστεύομεν εἰς ἕνα θεὸν πατέρα παντοκράτορα καὶ εἰς ἕνα κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν. προσέχετε ὅτι πρότερον τεθεικότες τὸ Χριστός, ὅ ἐστι μήνυμα τῶν δύο φύσεων, οὐκ εἶπαν εἰς ἕνα θεὸν λόγον, ἀλλ' ἔλαβον τὸ ὄνομα τὸ σημαῖνον ἀμφότερα, ἵνα ὅταν ὑποκαταβαίνων ἀκούσηις θάνατον, μὴ ξενίζηι, ὅταν τὸν σταυρωθέντα καὶ ταφέντα, μὴ πλήττηι τὴν ἀκοὴν ὡς θεότητος ταῦτα παθούσης.*

[29] Loofs, *Nestoriana*, 296:1–11, 286:8–287:6 (this latter text was cited at Ephesus: *ACO* I.1.2, 46:17–23 [V.60.4]).

engaged methodically and precisely with the wording and grammar of the text, and which sought to establish that any alternative interpretation risked drifting into heresy. Nestorius' strategy was not without its flaws—his unusually 'bare' reading of the Creed, for instance, left him vulnerable to the charge of innovation. Moreover, Nestorius' position will likely strike the reader as reliant upon a ludicrous over-interpretation of the Creed's terminology, or as cutting against the grain of its incarnational logic. And yet, as we shall see, it quickly became evident that Nestorius' opponents found his exegesis very hard to rebut on the basis of the Nicene Creed alone. The controversy began starkly to expose, in other words, the inadequacy of the (wholly sufficient, entirely authoritative) Creed to act as an effective arbiter of Christological debate.

This growing crisis in Nicaea's discursive role was demonstrated by the earliest attempts to refute Nestorius' position. These came not from Cyril, but from Nestorius' opponents in Constantinople itself.[30] The favoured strategy was to link Nestorius' apparent denial of 'Theotokos' with the infamous 'mere man' heresy of Paul of Samosata. This was the accusation made by Proclus in his great homily on Mary, it was the charge that Socrates (present in Constantinople) most associated with Nestorius, and it was the claim that Nestorius himself most frequently sought to deny.[31]

This was, moreover, the tactic employed in the anonymous *Contestatio* of 429.[32] Exploiting Nestorius' energetic circulation of his own writings, the *Contestatio* arranged six carefully selected snippets from his homilies, and placed them alongside six apparently similar quotations from Paul of Samosata. The main concern of the document, however, was to provide a convincing refutation of Nestorius' idea of Nicaea. It appealed, for instance, to a quotation from the 'blessed Bishop Eustathius', who was 'one of the 318 bishops at the holy and great council'.[33] This represented an attempt to appropriate the mantle of 'Nicaea' via one of its august fathers—the implication being that Nestorius' reading of the Creed could not be correct if it conflicted with the doctrine of a bishop who attended the council. Alas, the

[30] Nestorius' controversial election, and his treatment of the city's monastic communities, had left him with plenty of enemies: cf. Constas, *Proclus*, 41–56.

[31] Proclus' sermon: *ACO* I.1.1, 113–17 (V.19); Socrates' remarks: Soc., *H.E.* VII.32; Nestorius' denial of Paul's heresy: Loofs, *Nestoriana*, 298–313.

[32] *ACO* I.1.1, 101–2 (V.18). The compiler perhaps intentionally placed the *Contestatio* next to Proclus' sermon (V.19) to bring out the shared Samosatan accusation. Bevan convincingly shows that this work should be dated to late 428, before Cyril's decisive intervention in the debate: G. A. Bevan (2016), *The New Judas: The Case of Nestorius in Ecclesiastical Politics, 428–451 CE* (Leuven: Peeters), 106–7, cf. Wessel, *Cyril*, 219. The ascription of the text to Eusebius (subsequently Bishop of Dorylaeum) is only present in later witnesses (cf. Leontius of Byzantium, *Contra Nest. et Eut.* III.43).

[33] *ACO* I.1.1, 102:12–13 (V.18): *Συνάιδει δὲ τούτοις καὶ ὁ μακάριος ἐπίσκοπος Εὐστάθιος ὁ τῆς αὐτῆς Ἀντιοχείας, εἷς ὧν ἐκ τῶν τριακοσίων δεκαοκτὼ ἐπισκόπων ἐπὶ τῆς ἁγίας καὶ μεγάλης συνόδου* […].

quotation provided was not, in fact, from Eustathius at all.[34] This nicely illustrates one problem hampering any appeal to the bishops actually present at the Nicene Council, namely, that none of them had left a significant corpus of orthodox Christological reflection.

Unable to rebut Nestorius convincingly on the text of the Nicene Creed itself, the author of the *Contestatio* turned to an alternative credal statement: the baptismal creed of Antioch.[35] In this way, Nestorius' avowed concern for credal fidelity (*ὦ ζηλωτὰ τῆς ἁγίας πίστεως*!) could be undermined by demonstrating that he was not even faithful to his own 'home' creed.[36] And yet, as with the appeal to Eustathius, the strategy failed to land its punch, for the portion of the Antiochene Creed cited did not address, still less did it refute, Nestorius' doctrine. The quotation simply read: 'True God from true God, consubstantial with the Father, through whom also the ages were fashioned and all things came into being, who for us came down and was born from Mary the holy Virgin, and was crucified under Pontius Pilate'.[37] The author's intention was to highlight the Antiochene Creed's use of *γεννηθέντα ἐκ Μαρίας*, since it seemed to support the language of the 'double birth' that Nestorius had been so eager to deny. For this argument to have merit, however, it would be necessary to know the grammatical subject of those particular affirmations. Yet this was precisely what the author omitted, and for good reason—for he was no doubt painfully aware that the full text of the Creed of Antioch, just like that of the Nicene Creed, had as the subject of its second article the 'Lord Jesus Christ'.[38] The Creed of Antioch thus posed no significant threat to Nestorius' position, since Nestorius could simply read *γεννηθέντα ἐκ Μαρίας* as referring to the human nature of the one Lord Jesus Christ. It was only through evasive and misleading quotation that the author of the *Contestatio* could make the Creed of Antioch appear to contradict Nestorius.[39]

The earliest attempts to challenge Nestorius' idea of Nicaea, then, were rather unconvincing. By choosing to counter Nestorius' careful reading of the Nicene Creed through appeals to the writings of Eustathius, and to an entirely different creed, Nestorius' opponents in fact demonstrated the comparative strength of his interpretive case. Nestorius had staked his claim to orthodoxy on the basis of the text of the Nicene Creed itself, and the efforts of his Constantinopolitan interlocutors had done little to undermine his position.

[34] Graumann, *Kirche*, 310–11.

[35] Cf. Kelly, *Creeds*, 184–6; Kinzig, *Formulae*, II, 32–3. A similar attempt to refute Nestorius' doctrine via this Creed was made by John Cassain (*c.*430) in his *De incarnatione domini contra Nestorium* VI.3.2, 4.2, 9.1–2.

[36] *ACO* I.1.1, 102:4 (V.18).

[37] *ACO* I.1.1, 102: 9–11 (V.18): *θεὸν ἀληθινὸν ἐκ θεοῦ ἀληθινοῦ, ὁμοούσιον τῶι πατρί, δι᾽ οὗ καὶ οἱ αἰῶνες κατηρτίσθησαν καὶ τὰ πάντα ἐγένετο, τὸν δι᾽ ἡμᾶς ἐλθόντα καὶ γεννηθέντα ἐκ Μαρίας τῆς ἁγίας παρθένου καὶ σταυρωθέντα ἐπὶ Ποντίου Πιλάτου* [...]. The text is, ironically, almost identical to Theodore's creed.

[38] For the full text: Kinzig, *Formulae*, II, 67.

[39] *ACO* I.1.1, 102:5–8 (V.18).

However, they had shown that, if not easy to refute, Nestorius' arguments were at least easy to (deliberately) mishear—and the *Contestatio*'s cunning manipulation of Nestorius' writings, through selective citation and arrangement, initiated a strategy that Cyril would come powerfully to exploit.

Cyril's entry into the Nestorian controversy, indeed, inaugurated a more sustained attempt to develop a counter-reading of 'Nicaea', and so to refute Nestorius on his own ground. Cyril, in fact, did not enter the fray unprepared, for his rhetorical appeal to Nicaea had already begun to be developed in a number of earlier writings.

Firstly, in a letter written fourteen years previously to Atticus of Constantinople, Cyril had objected to the inclusion of John Chrysostom's name in the diptychs by questioning whether 'those who have done this are following the decrees of the fathers who assembled at Nicaea'.[40] For, as Cyril called that 'great synod' to mind, he imagined 'the entire assembly of those holy fathers as if in some way disagreeing with their eyes, and with all their strength stopping us from running towards agreement in this matter'.[41] Already at this early stage in his episcopal career, then, Cyril not only considered Nicaea to have a unique synodical status, but was confident in appealing to the council in creative ways. Here he depicts the fathers of Nicaea as a kind of living witness in the present, implicitly contrasting their episcopal sanctity with the tarnished reputation of Chrysostom (who was, of course, subject to a conciliar condemnation in 403). Already, too, there is a hint that Cyril is not only interested in Nicaea as a conciliar event or credal text, but as a gathering of episcopal 'fathers' who possess an authority almost independent of the council itself—a trajectory of thought further developed during the Nestorian controversy.

Secondly, we have noted in the previous chapter that Cyril's response to the Synod of Carthage (419) revealed his acute concern to preserve and transmit the true, uncorrupted text of Nicaea, and so present himself as the guardian of a true, uncorrupted orthodoxy. This emphasis on establishing Nicaea's textual purity would also play a significant role in his anti-Nestorian polemic.

Thirdly, Cyril had appealed to Nicaea at the start of his *De Trinitate Dialogi*, quoting the entire Creed.[42] This is significant not only in demonstrating again Cyril's concern to be seen as faithfully 'Nicene' (and 'Athanasian'[43]), but also in revealing a pattern in Cyril's dogmatic method, whereby he first quoted the

[40] Cyril, *Ep.* 76.1 (*Gr. 1431*, 25:16–18): *διασκοπούμενός τὲ καὶ καθ' ἐαυτὸν ἐννοῶν εἰ ταῖς τῶν πατέρων τῶν ἐν Νικαίαι συνελθόντων ἀκολουθοῦσι δόξαις οἱ τοῦτο πεπραχότες* [...].

[41] Cyril, *Ep.* 76.1 (*Gr. 1431*, 25:18–21): *καὶ βραχύ τι τὸν τῆς διανοίας ὀφθαλμὸν πρὸς τὴν μεγάλην ἐκείνην ἀνατείνας σύνοδον, ὅλην ὁρῶ τῶν ἁγίων πατέρων τὴν ὁμήγυριν ὥσπερ τισὶν ὀφθαλμοίς ἀνανεύουσαν, καὶ παντὶ σθένει διακωλύουσαν ἡμᾶς τρέχειν ἡμᾶς εἰς τὴν ἐπί τούτῳ συναίνεσιν.*

[42] Cyril, *Dial. Trin.* 1 (*SC* 231, 142:33–4); oddly, this citation of the Creed is omitted from Dossetti, *Il Simbolo*.

[43] On the centrality of Athanasius to Cyril's early writings: Wessel, *Cyril*, 15–111.

full text of the Nicene Creed and then provided an interpretation of it. We will see the pattern recurring in his *Ad Monachos*, in his *Third Letter to Nestorius*, and in his Ephesine *acta* of 22 June and 22 July 431. In doing this, Cyril may have been echoing the layout of scriptural commentaries, or he may have been using the conventions for written doctrinal dialogues, in which the contending parties began by presenting their respective creeds as a starting point for discussion.[44]

In citing the Creed, Cyril waxed lyrical about Nicaea's great authority, God's guidance of the council's deliberations, and its precise definition of the faith—and emphasized that one must interpret the Creed according to the 'royal road', rather than according to 'our own good pleasure'.[45] Following Athanasius, Cyril thus contended that Nicaea should be read in terms of the governing *σκοπός* of the text, as mediated and secured by the Holy Spirit. For Cyril, this 'royal road' did not yet encompass the writings of later 'fathers', but the evidence of his early writings does suggest that, on the eve of the Nestorian controversy, Cyril was already used to presenting himself as the defender of Nicaea, and to 'reading' the Creed in a manner that differed from Nestorius' intense focus on its precise vocabulary.

It is unsurprising, then, that Cyril's initial response to Nestorius' position was in large part to fall back upon his familiar doctrinal emphases, biblical proof-texts, and self-consciously Athanasian argumentation. Indeed, as Liébaert demonstrated, Cyril's *Festal Letter XVII* (429) represented an essentially conservative reassertion of his early Christology (especially the focus on the single subject of the Logos), rather than a meaningful engagement with Nestorius' doctrine.[46]

[44] Cf. A. von Stockhausen (2010), 'Die pseud-athanasianische Disputatio contra Arium: eine Auseinandersetzung mit "arianischer" Theologie in Dialogform', in A. von Stockhausen and H. C. Brennecke (eds), *Von Arius zum Athanasianum: Studien zur Edition der Athanasius Werke* (Berlin: de Gruyter), 133–55. Stockhausen's suggested attribution of the pseudo-Athanasian *disputatio* to Cyril himself seems unlikely, since the text indulges in the kind of legendary depictions of the circumstances of Nicaea that are not characteristic of Cyril's style.

[45] Cyril, *Dial. Trin.* 1 (*SC* 231, 140:10–142:31): *παροισθέντων εἰς μέσον τῶν ἀκριβῶς καὶ ἐξητασμένως διωρισμένων ἐν τῇ ἁγίᾳ τε καὶ πανευφήμῳ συνόδῳ, τῇ συνειλεγμένῃ κατὰ καιροὺς ἐν πόλει τῇ Νικαέων, καταθρήσωμεν, εἰ δοκεῖ, τί τοῖς ἑλομένοις ἑτεροδοξεῖν οὐκ ἀδιαβλήτως ἔχειν δοκεῖ. Τὴν γὰρ ἄριστά τε καὶ μετὰ Θεοῦ διωρισμένην τε καὶ ἐκτεθεῖσαν πίστιν παρὰ τῆς ἁγίας καὶ μεγάλης ἐκείνης συνόδου κρηπῖδα καὶ ὑποβάθραν ἀκατάσειστόν τε καὶ ἐρηρεισμένην τῶν ἡμετέρων ψυχῶν εἴ γέ τῳ φάναι σκοπός, δοκιμώτατα μὲν ἐρεῖ, καὶ ἐπαίνων τεύξεται τῶν παρὰ Χριστῷ, πιστότατος δὲ καὶ ἀληθινὸς ἀναλάμψει προσκυνητής. Ἐπ᾽ αὐτῆς δὲ ἡμῖν ἀναγεγράφθω λέξεως τὸ θεῖον καὶ ἱερώτατον τῆς ἁγίας ἐκείνης συνόδου χρησμῴδημα, τουτέστι τὸ ἀπεξεσμένον καὶ τετορευμένον ταῖς εἰς πᾶν ὁτιοῦν ἀληθὲς ἐννοίαις τῆς πίστεως Σύμβολον, ὡς ἂν τοῖς ἐθέλουσι φιλοψογεῖν τῆς καθ᾽ ἡμῶν γλωσσαλγίας μηδεὶς τὸ παράπαν εἰσδεχθείη λόγος, ὡς ὀθνείοις τισὶν ἐπιπηδώντων δόγμασι καὶ παρέντων μὲν ἰέναι τὴν βασιλικὴν ὁδόν, ἐπὶ θάτερα δὲ παρεκτετραμμένων, κατὰ τὸ μόνῳ καὶ ἰδίᾳ δοκοῦν. Τουτὶ γὰρ δὴ καὶ αὐτὸς ἐγὼ λογισαίμην ἂν οὐκ εὐμεταχείριστον ἀληθῶς ἀρρώστημα νοῦ. Σοφία γὰρ ἀνεξέλεγκτος πλανᾶται, κατὰ τὸ γεγραμμένον.*

[46] J. Liébaert (1970), 'L'évolution de la christologie de saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie partir de la controverse nestorienne: La lettre paschale XVII et la lettre aux Moines (428–9)', *MSR* 27, 27–48.

In Cyril's *Ad Monachos* (mid/late 429), however, we can discern the seeds of a more nuanced strategy for 'reading' Nicaea against Nestorius.[47] Cyril began by outlining an exceptionally high view of the authority of Nicaea: it is the 'great and holy synod', at which the fathers set out 'the definition of blameless faith, while inspired by the truth of the Holy Spirit'.[48] For, he continued, 'they were not speaking as from themselves, but—as the Saviour said—it was the Spirit of God the Father speaking in them'.[49] As in *De Trinitate Dialogi*, Cyril then cited the entire Nicene Creed.[50] Paradoxically, it was precisely this exalted construal of Nicaea that released Cyril from having to ground his interpretation of the Creed on its exact wording—for, as a Spirit-inspired text, any particular clause or word therein could be properly read only in the light of the deeper *σκοπός*.[51]

Using this strategy, Cyril could evade Nestorius' basic textual claim that 'the holy and great synod neither called the Lord's mother "Theotokos", nor defined anything at all like this'.[52] For, Cyril argued, 'the divine disciples handed on this faith to us even if they did not make mention of the term'.[53] Or again: 'the mystery of the spiritual economy in Christ is proclaimed to us by the divine Scriptures…this is something which the fathers themselves have spoken about'.[54] For Cyril, the unifying activity of the Holy Spirit linked the inspired text of the apostles (Scripture) to the inspired text of the Nicene fathers (the Creed), and made them speak with one divine voice, expressing one harmonious message. Only if understood in this light could the Creed enable its readers to walk the 'straight path of truth', and so 'follow in the faith of the holy fathers'.[55] The absence of 'Theotokos' from the Creed, in short, did

[47] Cf. Graumann, *Kirche*, 280–99, for a helpful analysis of the use of 'father' language in the letter.

[48] *ACO* I.1.1, 12:22–3, 25–7 (V.1.5): *τὴν ἁγίαν ἐκείνην καὶ μεγάλην σύνοδον* […] *τί δὲ καὶ αὐτοὶ λελαλήκασιν οἱ πατέρες τὸν τῆς ἀμωμήτου πίστεως ὅρον ἐκφέροντες, ἐνηχοῦντος αὐτοῖς τἀληθὲς τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος.*

[49] *ACO* I.1.1, 12:27–8 (V.1.5): *οὐ γὰρ ἦσαν οἱ λαλοῦντες αὐτοὶ κατὰ τὴν τοῦ σωτῆρος φωνήν, ἀλλὰ τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ πατρὸς τὸ λαλοῦν ἐν αὐτοῖς*. This use of Mt. 10:20 subtly elides the Nicene fathers with the apostles.

[50] *ACO* I.1.1, 12:32–13:5 (V.1.6).

[51] Cf. *ACO* I.1.1, 12:5 (V.1.4), where Cyril's citation from Athanasius (*C. Ar.* 3.29) includes the word *σκοπός*.

[52] *ACO* I.1.1, 12:22–4 (V.1.5): *τὴν ἁγίαν ἐκείνην καὶ μεγάλην σύνοδον μήτε θεοτόκον εἰπεῖν τὴν τοῦ κυρίου μητέρα μήτε μὴν ὅλως ὁρίσαι τι τοιοῦτον* […].

[53] *ACO* I.1.1, 11:29–30 (V.1.4): *ταύτην ἡμῖν παρέδοσαν τὴν πίστιν οἱ θεσπέσιοι μαθηταί, κἂν εἰ μὴ τῆς λέξεως πεποίηνται μνήμην.*

[54] *ACO* I.1.1, 12:24–6 (V.1.5): *καταδεικνύωμεν τῆς ἐν Χριστῶι νοουμένης οἰκονομίας τὸ μυστήριον τίνα μὲν τρόπον παρὰ τῆς θείας ἡμῖν κεκήρυκται γραφῆς, τί δὲ καὶ αὐτοὶ λελαλήκασιν οἱ πατέρες* […].

[55] *ACO* I.1.1, 13:21–5 (V.1.8): *ἀλλ᾽ ἐκεῖνοι μὲν οἵάπερ ἁμαξιτὸν ἀφέντες εὐτριβῆ τὴν ἀλήθειαν, ἐπὶ βόθρους ἵενται καὶ πέτρας καὶ ἧι φησιν ὁ Σολομών, τοὺς ἄξονας τοῦ ἰδίου γεωργίου πεπλάνηνται καὶ συνάγουσι χερσὶν ἀκαρπίαν· ἡμεῖς δέ, οἷς τὸ θεῖον εἰς νοῦν ἐνήστραψε φῶς, τῆς ἐκείνων ἀβελτηρίας τὰ ἀσυγκρίτως ἀμείνω φρονεῖν ἡιρημένοι καὶ τῆι τῶν ἁγίων πατέρων ἑπόμενοι πίστει* […].

not prevent Cyril from claiming that the fathers of Nicaea nonetheless affirmed it. With this interpretive scaffolding in place, Cyril could then provide a paraphrase of the Nicene Creed, in which his own characteristic Christology was elided with the 'evangelical proclamations of the holy and great synod'.[56] So, for instance, Cyril simply asserted that the Synod 'called the Logos of God, one Lord Jesus Christ', even though this was precisely to ignore Nestorius' central argument that the Creed did not, in fact, give 'Logos' as its grammatical subject.[57]

Another strategy Cyril developed in *Ad Monachos* was his attempt to make Athanasius' writings a necessary hermeneutical authority for 'reading' Nicaea rightly.[58] Thus, Cyril not only praised Athanasius' learning and piety ('a brilliant and famous man') but also associated him directly with the council of Nicaea: he was 'held in such reverence by everybody at the great and holy synod', and, though not a bishop himself, was highly influential on his bishop Alexander ('like a son to a father'), 'guiding him in everything useful and admirably showing him the way in all he did'.[59] In this manner, Cyril contended that Athanasius' voice could ultimately be heard in the Nicene Creed, and that his wider writings could therefore help to elucidate its true meaning. And since in his writings Athanasius affirmed 'Theotokos' (Cyril provided direct citations to show this), the Nicene Creed, read rightly, must also affirm it.

Cyril's argument here opened up a further issue, for his construal appeared to grant to Athanasius an authority as a 'father' partly independent of his association with Nicaea—indeed, in places it is almost as though Nicaea received some of its authority from Athanasius, rather than vice versa.[60] In this way, a strategy intended to affirm the unique conciliar status of Nicaea actually began implicitly to undermine it, for if 'fathers' possessed their own (Spirit-led?) authority, then would not a subsequent conciliar gathering of such men be of an equal authority to Nicaea itself? The seeds of a process that would eventually erode Nicaea's unique status were being sown precisely in the attempt to defend it.

[56] *ACO* I.1.1, 13:33–4 (V.1.9): *ἑπομένη δὲ τοῖς εὐαγγελικοῖς κηρύγμασιν ἡ ἁγία καὶ μεγάλη σύνοδος* [...].

[57] *ACO* I.1.1, 14:3–4 (V.1.9): *ὠνόμαζον δὲ τὸν ἐκ θεοῦ λόγον ἕνα κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν.*

[58] We note that at this stage *only* Athanasius is regarded as possessing a special interpretive authority for Nicaea.

[59] *ACO* I.1.1, 12:12–20 (V.1.4): *πῶς γὰρ ἂν ἁμάρτοι τἀληθοῦς ὁ λαμπρὸς οὕτω καὶ διαβόητος καὶ ἐν αὐτῆι τῆι ἁγίαι καὶ μεγάληι συνόδωι, τῆι ἐν Νικαίαι φημὶ κατὰ καιροὺς συναγηγερμένηι, πρὸς ἁπάντων τεθαυμασμένος; οὔπω μὲν γὰρ τὸν τῆς ἐπισκοπῆς διεῖπε θρόνον, ἐτέλει δὲ μᾶλλον ἐν κληρικοῖς· πλὴν ἀγχινοίας ἕνεκα καὶ τῆς ἄλλης ἐπιεικείας καὶ ἰσχνῆς ἄγαν καὶ ἀσυγκρίτου φρενὸς παρελήφθη μὲν τὸ τηνικάδε παρὰ τοῦ τῆς μακαρίας μνήμης Ἀλεξάνδρου τοῦ ἐπισκόπου, συνῆν δὲ τῶι πρεσβύτηι οἷάπερ υἱὸς πατρί, ποδηγῶν εἰς ἕκαστα τῶν χρησίμων καὶ τὴν ἐφ' ἑκάστωι τῶν πρακτέων ὁδὸν εὖ μάλα παραδεικνύς.*

[60] Cf. *ACO* I.1.1, 11:27–12:4 (V.1.4).

In his *Ad Monachos*, then, Cyril sought to offer an alternative 'reading' of the Creed that both refuted Nestorius' interpretation and revealed it as a betrayal of the authentic faith of Nicaea. Cyril's strategy, however, proved vulnerable. Indeed, his failure to engage with the precise wording of the Creed, and his concession that the text did indeed lack the crucial word 'Theotokos', were quickly exploited by his opponents. A number of pamphlets soon circulated in Constantinople ridiculing Cyril's exegesis of the Creed as leading to a plainly heretical Christology.[61] Most damagingly, Nestorius' ally Anastasius mockingly portrayed the *Ad Monachos* as signalling Cyril's agreement with Nestorius:

> [Cyril reminded his clerical supporters in Constantinople how] when Anastasius the priest met you, he pretended to be in quest of friendship and peace, and said, 'Our beliefs accord with what he wrote to the monks'. Then, with an eye to his own objective, he said with reference to me, 'Even he has said that the holy council did not mention the expression—I mean Theotokos'.[62]

Cyril's response to this attack was rather muddled. Initially, he attempted to fall back upon the older excuse for omissions in the Creed, explaining that since 'no such question had been raised at that time, there was therefore no need to bring to the fore matters that were not under debate'.[63] But then, perhaps aware that this line of argument was in tension with his previous claim that the Creed *did* confess 'Theotokos' if rightly interpreted, Cyril shifted his position, affirming that 'by the meaning of the ideas, they [i.e. the fathers of Nicaea] recognized that the Holy Virgin is Theotokos'.[64] To demonstrate this, Cyril offered a paraphrase of the teaching of the Creed, but (as in *Ad Monachos*) again interposed 'Logos' as the subject of its second article: 'the holy council affirmed that the Logos, through whom all things came into being, himself suffered, but suffered in the flesh, according to the Scriptures'.[65] Cyril's 'reading' of the credal text thus remained vulnerable at the very point where Nestorius had focused his attack.

The foregoing analysis is not intended to suggest, of course, that Cyril's Nicene case was *theologically* weaker than that of Nestorius. On the contrary,

[61] Cf. *ACO* I.1.1, 110:18–23 (V.22.2).

[62] *ACO* I.1.1, 110:4–7 (V.22.1): *ὅτι Ἀναστάσιος ὁ πρεσβύτερος συντυχὼν ὑμῖν προσεποιεῖτο ζητεῖν καὶ φιλίαν καὶ εἰρήνην καὶ ἔλεγεν ὅτι ὡς ἔγραψεν τοῖς μονάζουσιν, οὕτως φρονοῦμεν· εἶτα πρὸς ἴδιον σκοπὸν βλέπων ἔλεγε περὶ ἐμοῦ ὅτι καὶ αὐτὸς εἴρηκε τὴν ἁγίαν σύνοδον μὴ μεμνῆσθαι τῆς λέξεως, τῆς θεοτόκου φημί.*

[63] *ACO* I.1.1, 110:8–10 (V.22.1): *ἐγὼ δὲ γέγραφα ὅτι εἰ καὶ μὴ ἐμνήσθη ἡ σύνοδος τῆς λέξεως, καλῶς ἐποίησεν· οὔτε γὰρ ἐκινήθη τοιοῦτόν τι κατ' ἐκεῖνο καιροῦ, δι' ὃ οὔτε ἦν ἀνάγκη τὰ μὴ ζητούμενα φέρειν εἰς μέσον* [...].

[64] *ACO* I.1.1, 110:10–11 (V.22.1): *εἰ καὶ τὰ μάλιστα τῆι δυνάμει τῶν ἐννοιῶν οἶδε θεοτόκον τὴν ἁγίαν παρθένον.*

[65] *ACO* I.1.1, 110:26–7 (V.22.2): *ἀλλ' οὐδεὶς οὕτω μαίνεται· ὡς δὲ πολλάκις εἴπομεν, ἡ ἁγία σύνοδος αὐτὸν ἔφη παθεῖν τὸν λόγον τὸν δι' οὗ τὰ πάντα ἐγένετο, παθεῖν δὲ σαρκὶ κατὰ τὰς γραφάς;* cf. 110:11–13 (V.22.1).

it is clear from Cyril's next attempt to refine his idea of 'Nicaea' during the summer of 430—his *Second Letter to Nestorius*—that Cyril sought to give an explicit and cogent theological rationale for how the Nicene Creed should be interpreted. Here, Cyril emphasized the Creed's focus on a single divine person or identity, to whom is then attributed the experiences of incarnation, suffering, and resurrection.[66] The second paragraph of the Creed begins, in other words, not with some sort of composite God-and-man union (as for Nestorius), but with a divine person, consubstantial with the Father, who is the unique subject of the human predicates that follow. Cyril thus offers in his *Second Letter* an equally 'close' reading of the Nicene Creed to that of Nestorius, but roots his exegesis in the single-subject flow or logic of the text, rather than in the precise nature of its grammatical terms. As Nestorius himself later put it, the fundamental difference between his interpretation of the Creed and that of Cyril was over what constituted the 'beginning' of the text—both in the sense of its specific words and in the sense of the theological 'first principles' that animated its clauses.[67] The shared discursive commitment to the Nicene Creed's sole sufficiency as the arbiter of orthodoxy had driven Nestorius and Cyril to an intense focus on the credal text, subjecting it to a scrutiny that its brief and meagre words could not reasonably bear. Cyril's interpretation of the Creed may have been more theologically cogent, but he had still to demonstrate conclusively that Nestorius' position was *textually* inadmissible. The fact that the Creed's second article began not, as Cyril would have preferred, with the 'Logos' (i.e. an unequivocally divine subject) but instead with 'Jesus Christ' made this task difficult—and again in the *Second Letter* we find Cyril smuggling in 'Logos' to his account of the text.[68]

A more ambitious effort at demonstrating the superiority of his reading of the Creed came in the *Contra Nestorium*. Here Cyril developed his strategy by using Nestorius' own writings on the Creed against him. This allowed Cyril, for instance, to reveal that Nestorius had based his position upon a variant form of the Nicene Creed, and so, by providing the 'pure' text in pointed contrast, Cyril could present himself as the guardian of the authentic and uncorrupted Nicene faith.[69] In this way, Nestorius' reading of the Creed could be construed not only as inaccurate, but as indicative of his deeper opposition to the Church's tradition. Cyril thus accused him of opposing the 'very creed of the church's faith, which the fathers, once gathered together at Nicaea through

[66] *ACO* I.1.1, 26:20–5 (V.4.3). The wider theological significance of Cyril's Christology, in the context of the debates of the 430s and 440s, has been carefully analysed in D. M. Fairbairn (2003), *Grace and Christology in the Early Church* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), esp. chs. 3, 4, and 7.

[67] Nestorius, *Liber* (Bedjan, 210; Hodgson/Driver, 142).

[68] *ACO* I.1.1, 26:24–5 (V.4.3), cf. 28:17–18 (V.4.7).

[69] Cyril, *Contra Nest.* I.8 (*ACO* I.1.6, 29:3–12).

the illumination of the Spirit, defined'.[70] We note again here the importance of pneumatology in Cyril's argument: since the Holy Spirit brings coherence and unity to all those texts that He inspires, and to all those persons whom He guides, Cyril could call upon a much wider range of writings to help reveal the fuller meaning of the Creed's words, and the particular emphasis of one father could be claimed as the shared understanding of all.[71] It was in ignoring this broader context, Cyril contended, that Nestorius' reading of the Creed went astray: he 'calumniates it and alters the significance of the words, and dares to coin with a false stamp the very force of its ideas'.[72] Nestorius' fastidious precision, Cyril argued, was thus ultimately misplaced, for in not attending to the deeper Spirit-given meaning of the Creed (the 'force of its ideas'), he had wandered from the 'royal road', arrogantly spurning the fathers of Nicaea in order to impose his own personal interpretation.[73]

Yet this attack on Nestorius' interpretation of the Creed still failed to deliver the decisive blow. Cyril was certainly aware of Nestorius' argument that since the subject of the Creed's second article was the 'Lord Jesus Christ' it was incorrect to say that the Logos was born of Mary[74], but rather than addressing Nestorius' point directly, Cyril simply accused him of opposing the apostles and evangelists, since 'one will not find them using word for word your expressions'.[75] Despite quoting the Creed in full, Cyril's Christological arguments were still textually dependent on the assertion that when the fathers wrote 'and in one Lord Jesus Christ' they really meant 'God the Logos'.[76]

Having assessed the initial articulation of these competing ideas of 'Nicaea', we now examine some further discursive developments in the months leading up to the Ephesine council.

[70] Cyril, *Contra Nest.* I.5 (*ACO* I.1.6, 25:35–7): *ἐπειδὴ δὲ τοῖς νεωτάτοις αὐτοῦ δόγμασι τὴν ἀλήθειαν καὶ αὐτὸ τῆς ἐκκλησιαστικῆς πίστεως ἀντεξάγει τὸ σύμβολον ὃ διὰ τῆς τοῦ πνεύματος φωταγωγίας οἱ κατὰ καιροὺς ἐν τῆι Νικαέων συναγηγερμένοι πατέρες ὡρίσαντο.* Cf. Cyril, *Contra Nest.* I.7 (ACO I.1.6, 27:27–9), IV.2 (*ACO* I.1.6, 79:2–5).

[71] This strategy, of course, allowed Cyril to read into the Creed a far more developed Christology than it actually contained, and would be further refined in his written proceedings of 22 June 431.

[72] Cyril, *Contra Nest.* I.5 (*ACO* I.1.6, 25:37–9): *δεδιὼς μὴ ἄρα πως ὑγιᾶ τὴν πίστιν διασώσαιντό τινες ταῖς ἐκείνων φωναῖς παιδαγωγούμενοι πρὸς ἀλήθειαν, πειρᾶται συκοφαντεῖν καὶ τῶν λέξεων ἐναλλάττει τὴν ἀπόδοσιν, καὶ αὐτὴν δὲ τῶν ἐννοιῶν τὴν δύναμιν παρασημαίνειν ἀποτολμᾶι.*

[73] Cyril, *Contra Nest.* I.6 (*ACO* I.1.6, 26:29), I.7 (27:27–8, 28:33–4), II.2 (37:31), V.7 (105:1–7).

[74] For instance: Cyril, *Contra Nest.* I.7 (*ACO* I.1.6, 27:18ff.).

[75] Cyril, *Contra Nest.* I.7 (*ACO* I.1.6, 27:35–28:1): *Οὐκοῦν εἰ ταύτης ἕνεκα τῆς αἰτίας τοὺς πρὸ ἡμῶν γεγονότας αἰτιᾶι καὶ λελυπῆσθαι φὴς ὅτι μὴ ἀπαραλλάκτως ταῖς σαῖς εὕρηνται κεχρημένοι φωναῖς, ὥρα τάχα που συναιτιᾶσθαι καὶ αὐτοὺς τοὺς ἁγίους ἀποστόλους καὶ εὐαγγελιστάς. συγγεγράφασι μὲν γὰρ τῆς ἐπὶ Χριστῶι μυσταγωγίας τὰς βίβλους, αὐτολεξεὶ δὲ ταῖς σαῖς οὐκ ἂν ἐπιδείξειέ τις χρησαμένους φωναῖς.*

[76] Cyril, *Contra Nest.* V.7 (*ACO* I.1.6, 105:16–17); this basic weakness is largely ignored by McGuckin, *Cyril*, 175–226.

In Constantinople itself, the *Appeal of Basil the Deacon* represented a more nuanced attempt to wrest the Nicene mantle back from Nestorius.[77] As in the earlier *Contestatio*, Nestorius' teaching was linked to that of Paul of Samosata, but this accusation was now placed within a broader historical context, in order to contrast Nestorius' heresy with the great line of orthodox defenders of the faith. The appeal to the 'fathers' had thus now extended beyond those present at the Nicene Council to include a much greater cloud of episcopal witnesses. Like Cyril, Basil sought to exploit Nestorius' text-centred reading of Nicaea by construing it as the isolated interpretation of a single man, who had impiously rejected the consistent orthodox witness to the true Nicene faith. Moreover, the petition made clear that it was Cyril (the only living 'father' named) who stood as the contemporary embodiment of the faith of Nicaea. Even before Ephesus was convened, then, the claim that Cyril offered a more convincing idea of 'Nicaea' was being based not solely upon the strength of his exegetical arguments but also upon his personal authority as a 'father', with his own reading of the Creed being gradually elided with the voice of the patristic tradition.

Basil's strategy was not without its problems. Nicaea, though still acclaimed as the 'great and holy council', had been rendered by his narrative as merely one in a succession of authoritative witnesses to the true faith. Indeed, Basil's concern to make Nestorius the new Paul of Samosata meant that it was the 'holy council of 180 bishops that assembled at Antioch [268]' that was given pre-eminence, and Nicaea's primary contribution was in having 'confirmed the decree of those at Antioch'.[78] Rather than confront Nestorius' interpretation of Nicaea directly, then, Basil took a more circuitous route: since Nestorius followed Paul's doctrine, and Nicaea reiterated Paul's condemnation, Nestorius must (regardless of what he might claim) be unfaithful to Nicaea.

Finally, we note that in agitating for an oecumenical council to examine the matter, Basil expected Christ Himself to be present, 'to unite the most holy church, assemble his people, and enable the priests by proclaiming the true faith'.[79] Basil's remark is a reminder that the convening of Ephesus would come to raise profound questions concerning how the authority of a new oecumenical council would be understood in relation to the unique authority of Nicaea—for if Christ Himself was present afresh among His bishops, how could Nicaea's monopoly remain?

[77] *ACO* I.1.5, 7–10 (V.143).

[78] *ACO* I.1.5, 7:19–23 (V.143.1): *τῆς ἁγίας συνόδου τῶν ρπ ἐπισκόπων ἐν Ἀντιοχείαι ἀθροισθείσης κατὰ Παύλου τοῦ Σαμοσατέως, ἥτις καθεῖλεν αὐτὸν διὰ τὴν ἀσέβειαν αὐτοῦ διὰ τὸ μὴ ὁμολογεῖν τὸν Χριστὸν φύσει θεὸν καὶ υἱὸν θεοῦ πατρός, τῆς ἐν Νικαίαι μεγάλης καὶ ἁγίας συνόδου τῶν τιη ἐπισκόπων τῆς βεβαιωσάσης καὶ τὸν ὅρον τῶν ἐν Ἀντιοχείαι.*

[79] *ACO* I.1.5, 9:9–11 (V.143.4): *ἵνα τῆς συνόδου παραγενομένης τὴν ἁγιωτάτην ἐκκλησίαν ὁ Χριστὸς ἑνώσηι καὶ τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ συνάξηι καὶ τοὺς ἱερέας ἀπολαβεῖν ἐν τῶι τῆς ἀληθινῆς πίστεως κηρύγματι ποιήσηι πρὸ τοῦ εἰς πλάτος τὴν ἄδικον διδασκαλίαν ἐλθεῖν.*

Nestorius reasserted his own idea of 'Nicaea' in his *Second Letter to Cyril*. He now mirrored Cyril's strategy, carefully citing passages from Cyril's *Second Letter*, and demonstrating how they proceeded from a false reading of the Creed.[80] Nestorius also employed 'father' language more prominently (perhaps similarly adapting to Cyril's rhetoric), referring to the 'divine choir of fathers' and the 'statements of the holy fathers'.[81] Crucially, however, the 'fathers' remained for Nestorius only those who gathered at Nicaea, and the Nicene Creed remained the sole locus of their teaching. Truly 'attending' to the fathers, then, did not require reading a wider selection of patristic writings (as for Cyril), but simply demanded a careful scrutiny of the credal text. Thus, like St Paul encouraging Timothy to peer into the words of Scripture, Nestorius encouraged Cyril to look again at the Creed.[82] Cyril, he maintained, was guilty of 'reading the tradition of these holy men superficially', and so ultimately arrived at an (Arian) assertion of the Word's passibility.[83] That is, in attempting to make 'Logos' the subject of the Creed's second article, Cyril ended up directly implicating the divine nature in the mutability of the Incarnation. Accordingly, Nestorius quoted the Creed back at Cyril, reminding him that the text names its subject 'Lord Jesus Christ' (i.e. 'the terms common to Godhead and manhood'), and that it is upon these interpretative 'foundation stones' that 'the tradition of the incarnation, the resurrection and the passion' is built.[84] In his *Second Letter*, in short, Nestorius demonstrated how Cyril's counter-reading of the Creed remained vulnerable to critique, but also exposed the continuing 'bareness' of his hermeneutical approach.

In the months before the council, Cyril still struggled to commend persuasively the superiority of his own reading of the Creed. Indeed, in his *Letter to Celestine*, he conceded that the problem with Nestorius' sermons and writings was that many understood them as orthodox—that is, they did not *appear* straightforwardly heretical, but rather as a plausible and pious interpretation of the Creed.[85] Cyril restated his position once more in the *Ad Dominas*. The

[80] *ACO* I.1.1, 29:10–14 (V.5.1): *ἄρξομαι δὲ ἀπὸ τῶν πανσόφων τῆς σῆς ἀγάπης φωνῶν, αὐτὰς αὐτολεξεὶ παραθείς. τίνες τοίνυν αἱ τῆς θαυμαστῆς τῶν σῶν γραμμάτων διδασκαλίας φωναί; Ἡ ἁγία φησὶν καὶ μεγάλη σύνοδος αὐτὸν τὸν ἐκ θεοῦ πατρὸς κατὰ φύσιν γεννηθέντα υἱὸν μονογενῆ, τὸν ἐκ θεοῦ ἀληθινοῦ θεὸν ἀληθινόν, τὸ φῶς τὸ ἐκ φωτός, τὸν δι᾽ οὗ τὰ πάντα πεποίηκεν ὁ πατήρ, κατελθεῖν σαρκωθῆναι ἐνανθρωπῆσαι παθεῖν ἀναστῆναι.*

[81] *ACO* I.1.1, 29:21–2 (V.5.2): *τὸν θεῖον ἐκεῖνον τῶν πατέρων εὑρήσεις χορὸν* [...].

[82] *ACO* I.1.1, 29:15–24 (V.5.2), quoting 1 Tim. 4:13.

[83] *ACO* I.1.1, 29:19–20 (V.5.2): *ὅτι τὴν τῶν ἁγίων ἐκείνων ἐξ ἐπιπολῆς ἀναγινώσκων παράδοσιν* [...]

[84] *ACO* I.1.1, 29:27–30:4 (V.5.3): *Πιστεύω τοίνυν φασί, καὶ εἰς τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ τὸν μονογενῆ. σκόπησον ὅπως τὸ κύριος καὶ Ἰησοῦς καὶ Χριστός καὶ μονογενής καὶ υἱός πρότερον θέντες τὰ κοινὰ τῆς θεότητος καὶ τῆς ἀνθρωπότητος ὡς θεμελίους ὀνόματα τότε τὴν τῆς ἐνανθρωπήσεως καὶ τῆς ἀναστάσεως καὶ τοῦ πάθους ἐποικοδομοῦσι παράδοσιν, ἵνα τῶν ὀνομάτων τῆς φύσεως ἑκατέρας κοινῶν τινων σημαντικῶν προκειμένων μήτε τὰ τῆς υἱότητος καὶ κυριότητος τέμνηται μήτε τὰ τῶν φύσεων ἐν τῶι τῆς υἱότητος μοναδικῶι συγχύσεως ἀφανισμῶι κινδυνεύηι.*

[85] *ACO* I.1.5, 11 (V.144.4).

Nicene Creed was again set at the start of his argument (as a kind of hermeneutical key), and was again artfully paraphrased to emphasize the single subject of attribution and the consequent propriety of 'Theotokos', but what now followed was a much longer list of patristic citations.[86] In this, Cyril had taken a further step towards the more developed strategy of his later Ephesine *acta*, in which the Nicene Creed would be interpreted via a carefully selected florilegium of extracts from the fathers.

Cyril's correspondence with the aged Acacius of Beroea, however, revealed that some remained unconvinced by his particular reading of the Creed. For Acacius was acutely aware that the history of the interpretation of Nicaea was not as straightforward as Cyril wished to make it: Paulinus was orthodox, even though he did not sound as though he was, while Apollinarius was unorthodox, even though at times he sounded orthodox.[87] While Acacius acknowledged that 'Theotokos' was not necessarily contrary to Nicaea, he was not prepared to accept that Nestorius' reservations about the term thereby rendered his position contrary to the Nicene faith.

The intractability of the dispute over the idea of 'Nicaea' grew further with Celestine's judgement on Nestorius (August 430). Celestine's Roman synod left open the possibility of Nestorius' reconciliation, but avoided defining the terms on which it might be achieved. Crucially, of course, the Nicene Creed was entirely unsuitable for such a task, since Nestorius would have been able to affirm it *ad litteram* without making any doctrinal concessions whatsoever. Celestine's *Letter to Nestorius* (sent in the immediate aftermath of the ruling) recognized this difficulty, accusing Nestorius not of straightforwardly denying the faith of Nicaea but rather of distorting orthodoxy, 'wrapping the true in the obscure', and so (echoing Cyril's rhetoric) taking the twisted path, and the complicated route.[88] In this way, Nestorius' close textual reading of the Creed was associated with arcane (and ultimately deceitful) philosophizing. Tellingly, Celestine accused Nestorius of the '*excision* from the Creed handed down by the apostles of those words that promise us the hope of total life and salvation'.[89] By denying the Theotokos (and the Logos as the personal subject of the Incarnation), Nestorius had in effect, Celestine argued, subtracted from the Creed. Indeed, the true confession of Nicaea now involved, for Celestine, affirming a wider set of (largely Cyrilline) Christological emphases—and to fail to confess such doctrines represented an impious credal 'excision'. In this

[86] *ACO* I.1.5 63:9ff., cf. Graumann, *Kirche*, 323–34.

[87] *ACO* I.1.1, 98–9 (V.16), 99–100 (V.17).

[88] *ACO* I.2, 8:7 (CV.2.4): dum vera involuis obscuris; *ACO* I.2, 9:14–16 (CV.2.8): extendisti te latius, multis anfractibus circuisti; sero tamen diverso itinere pervenisti ad impium constitutum.

[89] *ACO* I.2, 9:9–11 (CV.2.8): inter multa quae a te impie praedicata universalis recusat ecclesia, symbolo ab apostolis tradito plangimus haec verba fuisse sublata quae nobis totius spem vitae salutisque promittunt.

way, Celestine could claim that Nestorius had fallen under the scriptural condemnation of those who added to, or subtracted from, the faith.[90]

Cyril's *Third Letter to Nestorius*, in which the conditions for Nestorius' reconciliation were laid out, represented his most ambitious attempt yet to present himself as the guardian of the authentic faith of Nicaea. The letter began with the Creed being quoted in its entirety, including the anathemas. Cyril's return to a full citation (as in *Ad Monachos* and *Contra Nestorium*) rather than a briefer summary of the Creed's teaching (as in the *Second Letter to Nestorius* and *Ad Dominas*) perhaps reflected the potency of Nestorius' remark (in his *Second Letter to Cyril*) that Cyril had distorted the actual words of the Creed.[91] After a thorough exegesis of the credal text, Cyril then appends his *XII Anathemas*, providing the terms by which Nestorius could return to the fold.

The form of Cyril's response here was highly significant. By quoting the Nicene Creed *with anathemas* (the first time he had done so in the Nestorian controversy), encasing it within his own interpretation, and then adding further anathemas, Cyril sought to present the condemnation of Nestorius as a natural extension of Nicaea's condemnation of the Arian heresy. According to this subtle construal, Cyril's anathemas subsumed and re-presented the Nicene anathemas—the new Athanasius, guided by the same Spirit, had reaffirmed Nicaea and so condemned by it the new Arius.[92] In this way, Cyril aimed to close off Nestorius' strategy of pleading fidelity to the precise wording of the Creed. For, as Cyril now emphasized, it was not enough merely to 'profess the text with your voice'—one must rather confess it according to the *σκοπός* of the Nicene fathers' ideas, that is, according to the 'royal road' of Spirit-led interpretation.[93] A 'bare' confession of Nicaea, Cyril contended, was no longer sufficient for the authentic articulation of Nicene orthodoxy.

Cyril now implicitly accepted, in other words, that Nestorius could not be defeated on the basis of the text of the Creed alone. He thus sought to locate the hermeneutical key to reading the Creed faithfully not *within* the credal text, but *outside* it, in the writings of those fathers who had been guided by the

[90] *ACO* I.2, 9:2–7 (CV.2.7).

[91] *ACO* I.1.1, 35:1–8 (V.6.3). Despite his consistent claim to stand upon the 'pure' text of the Creed, Cyril here modified it again—he changed, for instance, *ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας αὐτοῦ* (the form he had used in *Ad Monachos* and *Contra Nestorium*) to the ('Athanasian') form *ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ πατρός*.

[92] For the activity of the Holy Spirit at Nicaea: *ACO* I.1.1, 34:15 (V.6.2), 35:9–10 (V.6.3).

[93] *ACO* I.1.1, 34:14–18 (V.6.2): *οὐκ ἀρκέσει δὲ τῆι σῆι εὐλαβείαι τὸ συνομολογῆσαι μόνον τὸ τῆς πίστεως σύμβολον τὸ ἐκτεθὲν κατὰ καιροὺς ἐν ἁγίωι πνεύματι παρὰ τῆς ἁγίας καὶ μεγάλης συνόδου τῆς κατὰ καιροὺς συναχθείσης ἐν τῆι Νικαέων (νενόηκας γὰρ καὶ ἡρμήνευσας οὐκ ὀρθῶς αὐτό, διεστραμμένως δὲ μᾶλλον, κἂν ὁμολογῆις τῆι φωνῆι τὴν λέξιν)* [...]; *ACO* I.1.1, 35:12–14 (V.6.3): *Ἑπόμενοι δὲ πανταχῆι ταῖς τῶν ἁγίων πατέρων ὁμολογίαις αἷς πεποίηνται λαλοῦντος ἐν αὐτοῖς τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος καὶ τῶν ἐν αὐτοῖς ἐννοιῶν ἰχνηλατοῦντες τὸν σκοπὸν καὶ βασιλικὴν ὥσπερ ἐρχόμενοι τρίβον* [...].

same Spirit as the bishops who had assembled at Nicaea. Understanding the Creed was not a static matter of textual analysis, but rather a dynamic following in the fathers' steps; not conducted in a vacuum, but rather amidst a great cloud of witnesses; not trusting in the logic of the schoolroom, but trusting rather in the power of the Spirit to breathe afresh the unchanging faith upon the Church.

In beginning to articulate these principles, however, Cyril overreached himself. For his exposition of the teaching of the Creed was so provocatively expressed in the *Anathemas* that it won for him far more opponents than allies. Cyril's *Anathemas*, indeed, represented an uncompromising attack on the entire Antiochene exegetical tradition: the fourth anathema, for instance, condemned any attempt to make Christ's human nature a distinct subject of attribution, while the twelfth anathema insisted that it was the Word of God Himself who had suffered in the flesh.[94] Men like John of Antioch, who had previously encouraged Nestorius to back down, were now propelled to his side in horror at Cyril's doctrine.[95]

On the eve of the council, then, it was by no means clear that Cyril's idea of 'Nicaea' had won universal acceptance—indeed, as will become apparent, the Antiochene delegation regarded the primary purpose of gathering at Ephesus to be the investigation and condemnation of Cyril's *Anathemas* as contrary to the Nicene faith. In the aftermath of his *Third Letter*, Cyril was quickly pushed onto the defensive, emphasizing in a slew of writings that he had not abandoned Nicaea, and continued to derive his doctrines directly from its teachings.[96]

Meanwhile, in a series of sermons during December 430, Nestorius energetically rebutted the substance of the accusations against him, making it clear that he abhorred the errors of Paul of Samosata, that he was prepared to confess the Theotokos (if understood correctly), and that he was the faithful 'Nicene' opponent of Arianism and Apollinarianism.[97] In addition, a refutation of the *Anathemas* (the so-called *Counter-Anathemas*) now began to circulate in Constantinople under Nestorius' name.[98] Marius Mercator, in Constantinople at the time, provided a hostile commentary on the text—and it is telling that, in doing so, he felt it necessary to try to wrest the Nicene mantle back from Nestorius. Mercator thus emphasized that Nicaea was indeed sufficient, and that the Creed was not, in fact, silent on the Theotokos,

[94] *ACO* I.1.1, 41:1–4, 42.2–5 (V.6.12); cf. P. Galtier (1956), 'Saint Cyrille et Apollinaire', *Gregorianum* 37, 584–609.

[95] *ACO* I.1.1, 93–6 (V.14); cf. D. M. Fairbairn (2007), 'Allies or Merely Friends? John of Antioch and Nestorius in the Christological Controversy', *JEH* 58.3, 383–99.

[96] Cf. Cyril, *Apol. Orient.* 1 (*ACO* I.1.7, 34:12–13); Cyril, *Expl. XII Cap.* 1 (*ACO* I.1.5, 17:2–7).

[97] Cf. Loofs, *Nestoriana*, 298–313, 314–21.

[98] *ACO* I.5, 71–84; Nestorius himself was probably not the author: E. Schwartz (1922), 'Die sogenannten Gegenanathematismen des Nestorius', *SBAWPH* 1, 1–29.

for it clearly identified Jesus with the consubstantial Son of God.[99] It is clear that Cyril was still regarded by many in the city not as Nicaea's guardian, but as its greatest enemy.

The centrality of the conflict over 'Nicaea' by June 431 is further evident from the manner in which the emperor's orders regarding the convening of the council were interpreted. Theodosius' official instructions were remarkably vague, referring in stereotyped terms to the importance of restoring peace to the church, and trusting (somewhat naively) in the gathered bishops to reach an amicable consensus unaided.[100] Yet, crucially, on all sides these instructions were over-read, and the purpose of the council became understood as explicitly requiring the investigation and confirmation of the faith of Nicaea.[101] So, for instance, when Nestorius wrote to Theodosius in outrage at the proceedings of 22 June, he complained that the proper role of the council had been to 'hold a joint meeting of all and by a joint decree to confirm the creed of the holy fathers convened at Nicaea'.[102] Similarly, the Easterners' session of 26 June summarized the imperial instructions as involving 'an exact examination and confirmation of the pious faith of the holy and blessed fathers who assembled at Nicaea in Bithynia'.[103] Likewise, Cyril's council later reported to Theodosius that 'the instructions sent by your authority to the holy council have been duly realized', since 'we have explained to your piety the apostolic faith expounded by the 318 assembled at Nicaea'.[104]

It was thus the question of 'Nicaea' that occupied a central place in the minds of those who set out for Ephesus, and which was understood to be the chief business of the council. Cyril, Nestorius, and John of Antioch all arrived as the self-professed advocates of Nicaea, seeking to demonstrate how their

[99] *ACO* I.5, 74:16, 80:23–4; on the wider context of Mercator's writings: C. Konoppa (2005), *Die Werke des Marius Mercator: Übersetzung und Kommentierung seiner Schriften* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang).

[100] *ACO* I.1.1, 112 (V.23), cf. 73–4 (V.8), 120–1 (V.31); for a persuasive analysis of Theodosius' strategy, see T. Graumann (2013), 'Theodosius II and the Politics of the First Council of Ephesus', in C. Kelly (ed.), *Theodosius II: Rethinking the Roman Empire in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 109–29.

[101] Cf. T. Graumann (2014), 'Authority and Doctrinal Normation in Patristic Discourse: The Nicene Creed at the First Council of Ephesus', in J. A. Mihoc and L. Aldea (eds), *A Celebration of Living Theology: A Festschrift in Honour of Andrew Louth* (London: Bloomsbury), 24–6.

[102] *ACO* I.1.5, 13:31–2 (V.146.1): *καὶ οὕτως κοινὸν ἁπάντων ποιῆσαι συνέδριον καὶ κοινῆι ψήφωι κυρῶσαι τῶν ἁγίων πατέρων τὴν πίστιν τῶν ἐν Νικαίαι συναθροισθέντων.*

[103] *ACO* I.1.5, 121:13–15 (V.151.10) *μηδενὸς ἑτέρου ζητουμένου μήτε ἐγκληματικοῦ μήτε χρηματικοῦ κεφαλαίου πρὸ τῆς ἀκριβοῦς ἐρεύνης καὶ βεβαιώσεως τῆς εὐσεβοῦς πίστεως τῶν ἁγίων καὶ μακαρίων πατέρων τῶν ἐν Νικαίαι τῆς Βιθυνίας συνεληλυθότων*; cf. Candidianus' similar remarks: *ACO* I.4, 32 (CC.84).

[104] *ACO* I.1.3, 28:23–9:3 (V.92.1): *Τὰ μὲν προστεταγμένα τῆι ἁγίαι συνόδωι παρὰ τοῦ ὑμετέρου κράτους εἰς πέρας ἤχθη τὸ προσῆκον καὶ τοῦτο γνώριμον τῆι ὑμῶν κατεστήσαμεν εὐσεβείαι τήν τε ἀποστολικὴν πίστιν, ἣν καὶ οἱ ἐπὶ τῆς Νικαίας τριακόσιοι δέκα καὶ ὀκτὼ συναχθέντες ἐξέθεντο, φανερὰν κατεστήσαμεν τῆι ὑμῶν εὐσεβείαι καὶ τὸν ἐναντία ταύτηι φρονήσαντα Νεστόριον καθείλομεν τῆς ἱερατικῆς λειτουργίας τε καὶ παρρησίας τοῦ κηρύττειν τὴν ἑαυτοῦ δυσσέβειαν.*

opponents had misread the Nicene Creed and so had abandoned the Nicene faith. Cyril and Nestorius could both proudly give their assent to the text of the Creed, and could staunchly affirm Nicaea's unique authority and sole sufficiency. And yet both also fundamentally disagreed as to what that fidelity to 'Nicaea' actually entailed, bringing with them radically divergent construals of the very touchstone of the orthodox faith.

The Nestorian controversy had, in short, dramatically brought to the surface profound tensions in the inherited assumptions concerning the Nicene faith, and had exposed to unprecedented scrutiny the issue of the proper interpretation of the Nicene Creed. The discursive flexibility of Nicene tropes allowed every position to claim Nicaea's mantle as its own, and to read into the simple wording of the Creed its particular doctrinal idiosyncrasies. The Nicene tradition had, in this way, collapsed in upon itself, as a variety of self-confessed Athanasiuses took up arms against Arius *redivivus*. Nestorius had fashioned a reading strategy for the Nicene Creed which, through careful attention to the grammatical logic of the text, had proved difficult for Cyril decisively to refute. However, Cyril's shift from an *internal* to an *external* reading strategy, that is, from focusing on the text of the Creed itself to focusing on the wider patristic documents necessary to understand the text rightly, had opened up a fruitful new avenue of exploration, and increasingly allowed him to portray Nestorius' 'bare' reading as involving the arrogant rejection of the Spirit-led fathers. The discursive resources of 'Nicaea', in other words, could stimulate creative reflection as well as provoking profound conflict.

Nevertheless, the central dilemma facing the various protagonists of the upcoming council of Ephesus remained: how could 'Nicaea' be 're-received' so that one particular interpretation of it could be convincingly affirmed, while that very interpretation could be portrayed as the clear and always-held 'reading' of the Creed? How could that 'double movement', whereby innovation was effected precisely as continuity was reasserted, be persuasively achieved?[105] The remarkable levels of disagreement and division that would mark the conciliar activity of the summer of 431 bear eloquent witness to the difficulty of that task.

MIRROR STRATEGIES: THE DEFENCE OF NICAEA AGAINST ITS ENEMIES

Amidst the conciliar debacle of the summer of 431, Theodoret ruefully reflected that never had a writer of comedy composed such a laughable

[105] For the concept of the 'double movement', see especially Gray, 'Noah', 193–205.

story, or a writer of tragedy such a sorrowful play.[106] The tragedy of Ephesus lay in its failure to resolve the tensions in the idea of Nicaea that the previous three years of controversy and polemic had so dramatically exposed. Instead, two alternative 'readings' of Nicaea played out in parallel, as each party sought to construe their own doctrinal emphases as concordant with the Nicene Creed while condemning their opponents for espousing a theology contrary to it.

Which of these rival gatherings would come to be regarded as the true 'council of Ephesus' remained unclear throughout the second half of 431, and so the energy of both sides was focused upon demonstrating not only their doctrinal fidelity, but also their conformity to an image of 'Nicene' conciliar legitimacy—a task achieved as much through the carefully constructed written accounts of their conciliar proceedings as through the meetings themselves. Here too, however, the appeal to Nicaea proved problematic. For although it was a commonplace to affirm the Nicene council's unique authority, it remained unclear how to construe the authority of the Ephesine council relative to it: the latter, after all, was also 'oecumenical', composed of 'fathers', and gathering amid the presence of the Holy Spirit.[107] The bishops sought to reaffirm their sole fidelity to Nicaea, yet, by buttressing their own councils with Nicene tropes, they had to avoid the impression of diluting Nicaea's uniqueness. The transfer of the controversy over Nicaea to a conciliar context was something of a double-edged sword: it heightened the claims being made on both sides, and so deepened divisions, but it also released resources for expressing the idea of Nicaea in fresh and creative ways, especially through the subtle shaping of conciliar *acta*.

This section, then, will analyse the ways in which various ideas of 'Nicaea' were developed, deployed, and defended during the course of the rival Ephesine councils of 431. It will be contended that the fundamental conflict and central dynamic at Ephesus was between two opposed (yet mirroring) ideas of Nicaea, and that the conciliar stand-off which ensued revealed the difficulty in convincingly arbitrating between those divergent interpretations. We identify, however, green shoots of promise in the documentary products of the Cyrilline sessions, which began to develop an intriguing notion of the rejuvenating reception of the Nicene faith.

We begin by assessing Cyril's initial conciliar strategy at Ephesus, as expressed in the written proceedings of the first session of his council (22 June).[108]

[106] *ACO* I.4, 59:34–6 (CC.108).

[107] Tellingly, Theodosius had called the council for 'the very day of holy Pentecost': *ACO* I.1.1, 115:23 (V.25.2).

[108] In the ensuing analysis, the traditional numeration of the Cyrilline sessions at Ephesus is employed—though of course this numeration is itself shaped by the editorial presentation of the Cyrilline documents. There may well have been other conciliar sessions or meetings that were not formally recorded; conversely, some of the 'official' sessions (such as that of 22 July) may

It is first necessary to distinguish between the meeting of 22 June itself and the subsequent record of it, which was issued a week later.[109] The published Cyrillian proceedings, then, must be read in the light of the controversy that had developed in the days after 22 June: the flurry of protests from Nestorius and Candidianus, and two sessions of John of Antioch's counter-synod (which had set forth the Easterners' account of the Nicene faith, declared Cyril deposed, and ruled all the members of his pretended council excommunicate).[110] These documents (to be examined further below) established a powerful set of objections to the legitimacy of Cyril's session, and so to the legality of its condemnation of Nestorius: firstly, that it had been convened without all the bishops present (against the emperor's instructions); secondly, that it had proceeded irregularly (without Candidianus' consent); and thirdly, that it had subverted rather than confirmed the Nicene faith.

The written proceedings, then, represent a carefully tailored account of the conciliar session of 22 June, shaped partly to rebut the wave of accusations that followed in its wake. The long list of patristic citations against Nestorius, to take one example, was likely an editorial addition to bolster Cyril's position—this element of the proceedings is not mentioned in any account of 22 June (whether by friend or foe) before the publication of the official document.[111] In other cases, documents that did likely feature in the 22 June session appear to have been repositioned in the written proceedings—Capreolus' letter, for instance, seems to have been moved to bring out more clearly Nestorius' lack of respect for the orthodox tradition.[112]

By thus shaping the documentary record, Cyril sought both to defend his council from charges of procedural impropriety and to demonstrate that Nestorius' doctrine was clearly opposed to Nicaea. In this way, Cyril could claim that the emperor's instructions for doctrinal reflection on, and

have had little grounding in historical reality (of which more below). For a helpful recent narrative of the complex events of Ephesus, see Bevan, *New Judas*, 149–204.

[109] The proceedings of 22 June (*ACO* I.1.2, 3–64 [V.33–62]) were sent to Theodosius along with an official report from the Cyrilline council on 29/30 June (*ACO* I.1.3, 3–5 [V.81]); Theodosius wrote to the council on 29 June, but had not yet received the documents (*ACO* I.1.3, 9–10 [V.83], cf. *ACO* I.1.2, 68:5–8 [V.67]).

[110] Cf. Candidianus' protests (*ACO* I.4, 31–2 [CC.84], 33 [CC.85,86]), Nestorius' report to Theodosius (*ACO* I.1.5, 13–15 [V.146]), the first session of the Easterners' council (*ACO* I.1.5, 119–24 [V.151]), the Easterners' letter of excommunication (*ACO* I.1.5, 124 [V.152]), the Easterners' report to Theodosius (*ACO* I.1.5, 124–5 [V.153]), the second session of the Easterners' council (*ACO* I.4, 43–4 [CC.95]), and the ensuing conciliar letters (*ACO* I.1.5, 127–9 [V.155,156,157], *ACO* I.4, 44–6 [CC.96]).

[111] Cf. T. Graumann (2009), '"Reading" the First Council of Ephesus (431)', in R. Price and M. Whitby (eds), *Chalcedon in Context: Church Councils 400–700* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press), 31–6; A. de Halleux (1993), 'La première session du concile d'Éphìse (22 Juin 431)', *ETL* 69.1, 78–9; contrast Wessel, *Cyril*, 149–61, who can sometimes tend to take the written proceedings' presentation of events at face value.

[112] Cf. Graumann, 'Reading', 38–9.

confirmation of, the Nicene faith, had been obediently undertaken, and that the judgement of the Bishop of Rome had been fully carried out. Most significantly of all, by utilizing the possibilities that conciliar activity uniquely afforded (such as the tropes of Christ's presence and of the Spirit-led consensus of the 'father' bishops), and the opportunities for the subtle expression of the Nicene faith that written conciliar *acta* opened up, Cyril was able to present a richer and more developed articulation of his particular idea of 'Nicaea'.

Turning to the document itself, then, we note firstly that the Nicene Creed is quoted in full, and is set at the very beginning of the council's consideration of the faith.[113] Once again, Cyril places the Creed right at the start of his doctrinal discussion, as the unique authority for defining orthodoxy.[114] The inclusion of the Creed in its Cyrilline ('pure') form also implicitly asserts that Cyril is the guardian of the true text of the Creed, and so too the guarantor of its faithful interpretation.[115] The specific function of the Creed in the session is then made explicit: it was set down 'so that by comparing the statements about the faith with this exposition, those that accord may be confirmed, and those that differ may be rejected'.[116] Nestorius' refusal to attend would not prevent Cyril from meeting Theodosius' expectation of a doctrinal discussion—it would now simply happen between texts rather than people.

The ordering of these texts is significant. Cyril's *Second Letter* comes first, accompanied by a strong steer to the bishops from Cyril himself.[117] There is then an *interrogatio*, in which the bishops individually acclaim Cyril's text to be in harmony with the Nicene Creed. Only after this is Nestorius' *Second Letter* read out. By being read second, Nestorius' *Second Letter* could thus be judged heretical on purely logical grounds (i.e. it was opposed to Cyril's *Letter*, which had been found orthodox), rather than on the basis of its divergence from Nicaea per se.[118] In this way, Cyril was able to assert the superiority of his own interpretation of the Nicene Creed, without thereby having to demonstrate precisely *how* Nestorius' interpretation of the Creed was in error. Rather

[113] *ACO* I.1.2, 12:29–13:11 (V.43); cf. Halleux, 'Première session', 73.

[114] *ACO* I.1.2, 10:12–13 (V.39.3).

[115] The text of the Creed follows the version given in Cyril's *Third Letter* precisely, including the anathemas. Precise textual consistency was perhaps especially important in the quasi-legal context of demonstrating that Celestine's judgement on Nestorius (as applied via the *Third Letter*) was now receiving conciliar endorsement.

[116] *ACO* I.1.2, 12:24–7 (V.43): *ἀναγινωσκέσθω δὲ ἐν πρώτοις ἡ ἐκτεθεῖσα πίστις παρὰ τῶν συνελθόντων ἐν τῆι Νικαέων ἁγιωτάτων πατέρων καὶ ἐπισκόπων τῶν τριακοσίων δεκαοκτώ, ὥστε ταύτηι τῆι ἐκθέσει παραβαλλομένων τῶν περὶ τῆς πίστεως λόγων τοὺς μὲν συμφωνοῦντας βεβαιωθῆναι, τοὺς δὲ διαφωνοῦντας ἐκβληθῆναι.*

[117] *ACO* I.1.2, 13:21–3 (V.44.4): 'I am confident that I will be found not to have departed from the orthodox account of the faith or offended against the creed issued by the holy and great council convened in its time at Nicaea' (*διάκειμαι δὲ ὅτι κατ' οὐδένα τρόπον ἐκβεβηκὼς ἁλίσκομαι τὸν ὀρθὸν τῆς πίστεως λόγον ἢ γοῦν παραβεβηκὼς τὸ ἐκτεθὲν παρὰ τῆς ἁγίας καὶ μεγάλης συνόδου τῆς κατὰ καιροὺς ἐν τῆι Νικαέων συνειλεγμένης σύμβολον*).

[118] Cf. Graumann, 'Reading', 37–8.

than seeking to argue on the basis of the credal text itself, Cyril instead strove to impose his *Second Letter* as the Creed's authoritative hermeneutical key, so that the Creed could be read rightly only *through* its Cyrillian interpretation.

Such a strategy required, however, a clear endorsement from the assembled bishops that Cyril's own idea of 'Nicaea', as expressed in his *Second Letter*, was indeed consonant with the Creed. The proceedings, as has been noted, thus provide a long list of episcopal affirmations to this effect. Yet beneath what appears to be the monotonous repetition of largely similar statements, we can in fact discern a variety of different construals of Nicaea, and its relation to Ephesus.[119]

Some bishops, for instance, push beyond merely seeing Cyril's *Second Letter* as a secondary reflection or commentary upon Nicaea (and so 'orthodox' in a supplementary or derivative sense), and instead construe it as possessing an equivalent authority. Bishop Domnus of Opus, for instance, praises the *Letter* as now being 'rightly put on a par with the holy council of Nicaea of the 318 fathers…fully to be upheld together with them'.[120] Others go further still, and laud the *Letter* as embodying a *clearer* or *better* expression of true doctrine. Thus, Bishop Firmus claims that Cyril's *Letter* has 'made the meaning of the Creed clearer and more manifest to us, with the result that there is no ambiguity in the things said'.[121] Theodotus of Ancyra contends that Cyril's *Letter* 'expounds more fully what is there [in the Creed] said in summary', as do Silvanus and Paralius.[122] Paul of Phlabonis is even more assertive in his *sententia*, affirming that 'the one and the same radiant faith, formerly expounded by the holy fathers at Nicaea and now manifest through the unanimity of this great council' is 'proclaimed *yet more clearly* by the letter of our most holy father Cyril'.[123] So, while some bishops maintain the fiction that Cyril's *Letter* is merely an *identical* repetition of the Creed,[124] most acknowledge that, for the Nicene Creed to be heard rightly in a new context

[119] These episcopal responses have been largely neglected; see however: Graumann, *Kirche*, 373–82.

[120] *ACO* I.1.2, 17:20–3 (V.45.23): *ἀλλ᾽ ἡμεῖς γνωρίζομεν τὰ τυπωθέντα καὶ νῦν δικαίως παρὰ τοῦ ἁγιωτάτου ἀρχιεπισκόπου Κυρίλλου ἐξισωθέντα τῆι κατὰ Νίκαιαν ἁγίαι συνόδωι τῶν τριακοσίων δέκα καὶ ὀκτὼ πατέρων, ὧν πάντως μετὰ τούτων φυλάττειν δικαίως γνωρίζομεν.*

[121] *ACO* I.1.2, 14:1–4 (V.45.2): *Τὰ συντόμως καὶ ἐν κεφαλαίωι εἰρημένα παρὰ τῆς ἁγίας συνόδου τῆς ἐν Νικαίαι ἐξηγησαμένη ἡ σὴ θεοσέβεια λεπτῶς καὶ περὶ πόδα σαφεστέραν ἡμῖν καὶ ἐναργεστέραν τὴν κατάληψιν τῆς ἐκτεθείσης πίστεως ἐποιήσατο, ὥστε μηδὲν εἶναι ἐν τοῖς λεγομένοις ἀμφίβολον, πάντων ἀλλήλοις συμφωνούντων καὶ τῆς πίστεως βεβαιουμένης.*

[122] *ACO* I.1.2, 14:16–17 (V.45.4): *κατ᾽ οὐδὲν διαφωνοῦσα πρὸς τὴν ἔκθεσιν τῆς πίστεως ἐκείνης, τὰ δὲ συντομώτερον εἰρημένα πλατύτερον ἐκθεμένη.* For Silvanus: *ACO* I.1.2, 19:7–12 (V.45.36); for Paralius: *ACO* I.1.2, 23:21–5 (V.45.72).

[123] *ACO* I.1.2, 26:20–3 (V.45.95): *Μίαν καὶ τὴν αὐτὴν διαλάμπουσαν πίστιν ἐκτεθεῖσαν μὲν πάλαι διὰ τῶν ἁγίων πατέρων τῶν ἐν Νικαίαι, νῦν δὲ καὶ διὰ τῆς μεγάλης ταύτης συνόδου ἐκ συμφώνου φανεῖσαν καὶ ἐξ αὐτῆς τῆς ἐπιστολῆς τοῦ ἁγιωτάτου πατρὸς ἡμῶν Κυρίλλου λαμπρότερον κηρυχθεῖσαν.*

[124] For instance: *ACO* I.1.2, 26:9 (V.45.92).

of Christological dispute, Cyril's *Letter* must be employed as its hermeneutical key. Cyril's *Letter* thus express the teaching of the Creed more clearly and fully than the Creed itself, so that *not* to read the Creed via the *Letter* is in fact to read it *wrongly*, and to grasp its meaning inadequately.

At the same time, however, the episcopal responses are keen to avoid straightforwardly denying the shibboleth of Nicaea's sufficiency. This was a delicate balancing act, as Prothymius' rather tortuous response indicates: 'the exposition of faith read to us in the letter of our most sacred father Bishop Cyril neither omits nor adds anything to the faith expounded by the 318 fathers—or only in the mere expressions used'.[125] Similarly, Daniel of Colonia tried to express the unity of the two texts by saying that in Cyril's *Letter* he recognized the words, the syllables, and the 'conceptions of the doctrines' of the Nicene Creed.[126] Perhaps the most nuanced expression of this dynamic is found in the comment of Valerianus of Iconium:

> In different words we find one and the same rule of faith, since both were inspired by the same Holy Spirit. Recognizing that the contents of the letter of our most holy and God-beloved father Bishop Cyril are in accord and harmony with what was said and expounded correctly and precisely by the holy council at Nicaea, we too assent and agree to them, finding the letter like a perfume that renews the fragrance of their faith.[127]

According to Valerianus' construal, then, the *Second Letter* is in harmony with the Nicene Creed without thereby rendering it insufficient—rather, like a perfume, the *Letter* 'renews the fragrance' of the Nicene *πίστις*. Here is another gesture towards a nascent notion of 'rejuvenating reception': Cyril's *Letter* renews Nicaea without supplanting it.[128]

[125] *ACO* I.1.2, 16:5–8 (V.45.13): *Κατ' οὐδὲν λειπομένην ἢ πλεονάζουσαν τὴν ἔκθεσιν τῆς πίστεως τῆς ὑπανεγνωσμένης ἡμῖν διὰ τῆς ἐπιστολῆς τοῦ ἁγιωτάτου πατρὸς ἡμῶν καὶ ἐπισκόπου Κυρίλλου εὑρὼν τὴν πίστιν τὴν ἐκτεθεῖσαν παρὰ τῶν πατέρων τῶν τιη ἢ μόνον ἐν ψιλαῖς λέξεσιν.*

[126] *ACO* I.1.2, 17:1–4 (V.45.20): *Αὐτὰ τὰ ῥήματα καὶ τὰς συλλαβὰς σχεδὸν εἰπεῖν τὰς ἐμπεριεχομένας τῆι ἐκθέσει τῶν ἁγίων πατέρων τῶν ἐν Νικαίαι κατὰ καιρὸν τὴν σύνοδον ποιησαμένων καὶ τῶν ἐγγεγραμμένων δογμάτων τὰ νοήματα ἐν τῆι ἐπιστολῆι τοῦ ἁγιωτάτου καὶ ὁσιωτάτου ἐπισκόπου πατρὸς ἡμῶν Κυρίλλου.*

[127] *ACO* I.1.2, 16:15–21 (V.45.16): *Ἐν διαφόροις λέξεσιν ἕνα καὶ τὸν αὐτὸν κανόνα τῆς πίστεως εὑρίσκομεν, ἐπειδὴ καὶ τῶι αὐτῶι ἁγίωι πνεύματι ἑκάτερα ὑπηγόρευται. τοῖς οὖν ὀρθοδόξως καὶ ἀκριβῶς εἰρημένοις καὶ ἐκτεθειμένοις παρὰ τῆς ἁγίας συνόδου τῆς κατὰ Νίκαιαν σύμφωνα καὶ συνωιδὰ τὴν ἐπιστολὴν ἔχουσαν τοῦ ἁγιωτάτου καὶ θεοφιλεστάτου πατρὸς ἡμῶν καὶ ἐπισκόπου Κυρίλλου κατανοήσαντες, τούτοις καὶ ἡμεῖς συναινοῦμεν καὶ συντιθέμεθα, εὑρόντες τὴν ἐπιστολὴν ὥσπερ τι μύρον τὴν ἐκείνων πίστιν εἰς εὐωδίαν ἀνανεουμένην.*

[128] An implicit parallel may be being drawn here between the writings of Cyril and those of Athanasius, since the distinctive fragrance imagery (itself perhaps patterned on 2 Cor. 2:15) recalls Cyril's own description of Athanasius in *Ad Monachos*. Athanasius, Cyril writes, 'refreshed the whole word with his own writings as if they were some most fragrant balsam' (*ACO* I.1.1, 11:33–4 [V.1.4]); cf. *ACO* I.1.2, 28:3–7 (V.45.106). The repetition of this imagery may be a further indication of Cyril's editorial hand in the *acta*.

We note too in Bishop Valerianus' statement that it is the inspiration of the Holy Spirit that guarantees the conformity of the Nicene Creed and Cyril's *Letter* to the one rule of faith, and that His action is the source of their harmony. Indeed, on several occasions the guidance of the Holy Spirit, hitherto a trope indicative of Nicaea's unique authority, is also claimed both for Cyril's *Letter* and for the Ephesine council itself.[129] For instance, Fidus attests that Cyril's *Letter* is 'in accord with their [the 318 fathers'] faith, as if written by the Holy Spirit', with the result that 'he who does not abide by the same faith of the Holy Spirit has been expelled from the holy and catholic church'.[130] Paulianus of Maiuma claims a dual authorship for the *Letter*, as 'written down by the most religious bishop Cyril and the Holy Spirit'.[131] Similarly, Macarius of Antaeopolis finds 'the same grace of the Holy Spirit in the Creed issued by the most holy fathers at Nicaea and in the letter of the most holy and most sacred archbishop Cyril'.[132]

Pneumatology was, in other words, the crucial 'glue' that held these two documents together, and that made it possible for Cyril to claim for his letter inseparable continuity with Nicaea, without thereby heretically adding to the Creed. In this way, the appeal to the Holy Spirit helped to 'cover the nakedness of Noah'[133]—such a strategy meant that the patent inadequacy of the Creed read *ad litteram* to address the Christological dispute could be overcome, while fidelity to Nicaea could be robustly reasserted. According to this construal, then, Cyril's *Letter* was now incorporated into that special group of Spirit-inspired texts that constituted the 'royal road' of faithful interpretation of Nicaea. This is what must now be affirmed, as Heracleon of Tralles put it, if one were truly to follow in the footsteps of the holy fathers.[134]

This distinctive articulation of the activity of the Holy Spirit did, however, open up some unexplored questions. For instance, did His inspiration apply only to Cyril's *Second Letter*, or to all Cyril's writings? Some bishops certainly push in the latter direction, such as Hermogenes of Rhinocolura: 'it is one and the same Holy Spirit who inspired both the fathers at Nicaea about the faith, and the soul and tongue of the most holy and most sacred father and

[129] Some bishops do reserve the ascription of the inspiration of the Holy Spirit to Nicaea alone, for instance: *ACO* I.1.2, 25:5–9 (V.45.83), 28:17–21 (V.45.109); in contrast, Capreolus' letter confidently expects Him to be operative in the gathered bishops' hearts throughout their proceedings: *ACO* I.1.2, 53:15–16 (V.61).

[130] *ACO* I.1.2, 16:28–30 (V.45.18): *σύμφωνα τῆι ἐκείνων πίστει ὥσπερ ἐξ ἁγίου πνεύματος γεγραμμένην, καὶ πιστεύω τὸν μὴ ἐμμένοντα τῆι αὐτῆι πίστει τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος ἐκβεβλῆσθαι τῆς ἁγίας καὶ καθολικῆς ἐκκλησίας.*

[131] *ACO* I.1.2, 16:32–3 (V.45.19): *ταύτην παρὰ τοῦ θεοσεβεστάτου ἐπισκόπου Κυρίλλου γραφεῖσαν ἐπέγνων καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος.*

[132] *ACO* I.1.2, 25:28–30 (V.45.89): *Εὑρὼν τὴν αὐτὴν τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος χάριν ἔν τε τῆι ἐκτεθείσηι παρὰ τῶν ἁγιωτάτων πατέρων ἐν Νικαίαι πίστει ἔν τε τῆι ἐπιστολῆι τοῦ ἁγιωτάτου καὶ ὁσιωτάτου ἀρχιεπισκόπου Κυρίλλου* [...].

[133] Cf. Gray, 'Noah', 193–205.

[134] *ACO* I.1.2, 23:14 (V.45.71).

archbishop Cyril'.[135] This, of course, gives rise to a further question, which would be of profound significance for the ensuing decades of controversy: was Cyril's authority as a 'father' located in his own person (in which case everything he wrote might be understood as possessing a special status), or only in those texts that the Spirit-led oecumenical council had solemnly affirmed?

The use of 'father' language in the bishops' responses is thus also significant. The word is, in many cases, employed as a special honorific title for the bishops present at Nicaea.[136] Tellingly, however, it is also used to refer to Cyril himself, in order to assert his continuity with the fathers of Nicaea. Theodotus of Ancyra, for example, speaks in quick succession of 'the 318 holy fathers convened at Nicaea' and 'the most religious and most holy father Bishop Cyril'.[137] Cyril is thus absorbed into this august Nicene company, just as his *Letter* bears 'the impresses of the fathers'.[138] Moreover, several bishops also refer to themselves collectively as 'fathers'. Matidianus of Corascesium, for instance, refers to 'the holy fathers now present', while Eutychius of Theodosiopolis emphasizes that his own statement is in accord with 'the creed issued by the 318 fathers assembled at Nicaea' and with 'what the holy fathers have expounded at this great council'.[139]

Meeting at Pentecost for the first oecumenical council since 325 evidently encouraged the gathered bishops to see themselves as 'fathers' who, like those at Nicaea, were guided by the Holy Spirit—and by Christ Himself[140]—into the renewed promulgation of the Nicene faith. According to this construal, the 'holy' and 'great' council of Nicaea was authoritatively reaffirmed in the 'holy' and 'great' council of Ephesus.[141] The effect is a kind of conciliar mimesis, in which Ephesus retraced the judgement of Nicaea, and so brought that judgement to bear afresh in a new context. In the event of 'confirming' Nicaea,

[135] *ACO* I.1.2, 29:22–4 (V.45.117): *Ἓν καὶ τὸ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα ἅγιον τό τε ἐν τοῖς πατράσι τοῖς ἐν Νικαίαι ἐνηχῆσαν περὶ τῆς πίστεως καὶ τὸ ἐν τῆι ψυχῆι καὶ γλώττηι τοῦ ἁγιωτάτου καὶ ὁσιωτάτου πατρὸς καὶ ἀρχιεπισκόπου Κυρίλλου.*

[136] For instance, *ACO* I.1.2, 14:9 (V.45.3).

[137] *ACO* I.1.2, 14:14–16 (V.45.4): *τῶν ἁγίων πατέρων τῶν τιη ἐν Νικαίαι…τοῦ θεοσεβεστάτου καὶ ἁγιωτάτου πατρὸς καὶ ἐπισκόπου Κυρίλλου*; cf. *ACO* I.1.2, 14:22–7 (V.45.5), *ACO* I.1.2, 24:22–7 (V.45.80).

[138] *ACO* I.1.2, 17:3–4 (V.45.20): *ὥσπερ τινὰς πατρώιους χαρακτῆρας.*

[139] *ACO* I.1.2, 18:24–5 (V.45.32): *παρὰ τῶν νῦν τε παρόντων ἁγίων πατέρων.* 27:17–22 (V.45.102): *Ἐκ νέας ἡλικίας καθὼς ἐπιστεύσαμεν, οὐδὲν ἐξενίσθημεν ἐκ τῆς ἀναγνωσθείσης ἐπιστολῆς παρὰ τοῦ ἁγιωτάτου καὶ θεοφιλεστάτου ἀρχιεπισκόπου Κυρίλλου τῆς ἐπισταλείσης τῶι εὐλαβεστάτωι Νεστορίωι. σύμφωνος γὰρ εὑρέθη τῆι ἐκτεθείσηι πίστει τῶν τιη πατέρων τῶν συνελθόντων ἐν τῆι Νικαέων, καὶ οὕτως πιστεύω, καθὼς καὶ οἱ ἅγιοι πατέρες ἐξέθεντο ἐν ταύτηι τῆι μεγάλῃι συνόδωι*, cf. *ACO* I.1.2, 15:25–8 (V.45.10).

[140] The presence of Christ at the 22 June proceedings was indicated by the open gospel book (*ACO* I.1.2, 37:26–7 [V.51]), and by final verdict on Nestorius being delivered *through* the council *by* the Lord Jesus Christ (*ACO* I.1.2, 54:24–6 [V.62]).

[141] For these adjectives being used to mark out the council of Nicaea: *ACO* I.1.2, 18:11 (V.45.28); and for examples of the same descriptors being applied to Ephesus: *ACO* I.1.2, 14:32–3 (V.45.5), 16:23 (V.45.17), 23:6 (V.45.69).

Ephesus had become in some sense inseparable from it: just as the Creed could be properly 'read' only through its authoritative interpretation in Cyril's *Second Letter*, so too the Nicene Council could only be fully grasped through its authoritative confirmation in Cyril's Ephesine council.

We note the further articulation of some of these themes in the remainder of the 22 June proceedings. Unsurprisingly, the episcopal responses to Nestorius' *Letter* are fewer in number than the responses to Cyril's Letter—since, as we have noted, Cyril's *Letter* had already been declared concordant with the Creed, and so Nestorius' *Letter* had, self-evidently, to be judged contrary to it. Tellingly, however, although the bishops were asked to measure the orthodoxy of Nestorius' *Letter* against the Nicene Creed,[142] the majority of responses in fact measured it against Cyril's *Letter*.[143] The primary purpose of the endeavour thus becomes clear: Cyril's *Letter* is to be clearly established as the authoritative and necessary lens through which the Nicene Creed must be read, and the Creed itself rather drops out of view. Nonetheless, there are hints that the superiority of Cyril's interpretation of the Creed over that of Nestorius was not, in fact, particularly obvious or clear-cut: Firmus, for instance, conceded that Nestorius' letter did possess the 'appearance' of piety.[144] Only Acacius of Melitene (a fervent ally of Cyril) made a sustained effort to demonstrate that Nestorius' *Letter* ran contrary to the Creed, but he did so largely by parroting Cyril's own earlier polemic against Nestorius' doctrine.[145]

The anathematization of Nestorius and his doctrine was then formally declared (in a manner that emphasized the unanimous acclamations of the Spirit-filled council), after which were cited, somewhat awkwardly, a variety of documents showing that Rome's verdict had been duly imposed, and that, in violation of Celestine's ultimatum, Nestorius had stubbornly persisted in his heretical opinions. Capreolus' letter is utilized to make more explicit the contrast between Nestorius' apparent doctrinal innovation and Cyril and Capreolus' pious humility in following the traditional faith.[146] The written proceedings thus seek strenuously to present the 22 June session as involving only the confirmation and preservation of what had always been taught by the fathers, in order to rebut the allegations of illegality and novelty made by Cyril's opponents. Moreover, as Cyril emphasized in the report to Theodosius that accompanied the proceedings, his was supremely a *Nicene* council, legitimate because it had echoed and retracted the activity of Nicaea itself.

[142] *ACO* I.1.2, 31:15–17 (V.47.1). [143] e.g. *ACO* I.1.2, 33:3–7 (V.47.10).

[144] *ACO* I.1.2, 31:25–6 (V.47.4): *Μόρφωσιν εὐσεβείας περιθεὶς ἐν προοιμίοις τῆι ἐπιστολῆι* […].

[145] *ACO* I.1.2, 32:18–21 (V.47.8). On the whole, the bishops make relatively generic comments on Nestorius' *Letter*, such as that it is self-contradictory—for instance, *ACO* I.1.2, 32:1–4 (V.47.5).

[146] Capreolus' letter is given a clear 'spin', both by Peter the notary (*ACO* I.1.2, 52:6–8 [V.60.25]) and Cyril (54:11–13 [V.61]).

Not only was Christ present, as at Nicaea, but Theodosius was the new Constantine.[147] For, just as Constantine assembled the 318 bishops at Nicaea to compose the Creed, so now, in the authoritative confirmation of that Creed, his 'orthodox faith has been made yet more glorious by your [Theodosius'] authority'.[148]

In short, then, Cyril's written proceedings of 22 June represented a significant and creative development in the articulation of his idea of Nicaea. Cyril utilized the unique possibilities afforded by a conciliar context to buttress the authority of his own interpretation of the Nicene Creed, demonstrating that it now had the formal approval of the Spirit-led 'fathers' of an oecumenical council. He also exploited the opportunities offered by conciliar documentation to shape more carefully, and express more powerfully, his particular construal of the Nicene faith, selecting and arranging texts to present his *Second Letter* as the necessary hermeneutical lens through which the Creed must be faithfully read, and to portray Nestorius as the arrogant opponent of the Nicene tradition. And, just as Cyril's *Letter* was made the means by which the Nicene Creed was to be authoritatively interpreted, so Cyril's council was made the means by which the Nicene council was to be authoritatively confirmed.

It was, as we have seen, a delicate balance to strike: the *Letter* more fully expounded the Creed, without thereby adding to it; the Cyrilline council had recapitulated the Nicene council, without thereby supplanting its unique status; a new Christological doctrine had been acclaimed, without the orthodox faith having undergone any change. It was Cyril's use of pneumatology that helped to prevent these kinds of tensions from lapsing into outright contradiction—the Holy Spirit's inspiration functioned as the principle of coherence between different texts, and the guarantor of unity between different councils. The Spirit was the means by which, in other words, a 'rejuvenating reception' of the unchanging faith of Nicaea could take place.

Cyril's strategy remained, however, a work in progress. The written proceedings betray something of the intense pressure under which they were forged, with some of the documents (such as the patristic citations) placed awkwardly. Moreover, by seeking to bring Ephesus under Nicaea's sacred canopy, Cyril laid himself open to the charge that he had impiously added to the solely sufficient Nicene faith, or had in some sense detracted from its unique authority.

[147] *ACO* I.1.3, 4:6–7 (V.81.4).

[148] *ACO* I.1.3, 4:18–22 (V.81.5): *μεθ' ὃ τὴν ἔκθεσιν τῆς εὐσεβοῦς πίστεως προθέντες τῆς πρότερον μὲν παρὰ τῶν ἁγιωτάτων ἀποστόλων παραδεδομένης ἡμῖν, μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα ἐκτεθείσης παρὰ τῶν ἁγιωτάτων πατέρων τῶν τιη ἐν τῆι Νικαέων πόλει συνηγμένων παρὰ τοῦ ἐν ἁγίοις Κωνσταντίνου, οὗ τὴν ὀρθὴν πίστιν λαμπροτέραν ἐπέδειξε τὸ ὑμέτερον κράτος* [...].

Crucially, of course, Cyril's attempt at Ephesus to enshrine his idea of 'Nicaea' as authoritative was not conducted in a vacuum. Nestorius, Candidianus, and the Eastern delegation under John of Antioch all sought in different ways to refute this Cyrilline construal by articulating their own. Ephesus 431 was, at heart, a struggle over who could more convincingly present themselves as the advocates and defenders of the Nicene faith.

First among these anti-Cyril Nicene strategies was that coordinated by Nestorius himself, who, with the support of seventy bishops already arrived in Ephesus, issued a protest against Cyril's plans to convene the council on 22 June. Since many of these bishops quickly switched their allegiance to Cyril's council (thirty-one of them before the week was out[149]), this document represents the concerns less of a unified pro-Nestorius grouping and more of a loose coalition opposed to Cyril's actions. The rallying point for these bishops was, unsurprisingly, Nicaea:

> Well-known is the faith of orthodox profession, which was preached to us from of old by the divine and venerable scriptures; and indeed this very faith was handed down to us by the holy fathers who assembled at the council at Nicaea, of whom there were as many cases of suffering for piety as there were council members.[150]

This appeal represents a subtle attempt to identify the true successors of Nicaea *not* as the bishops gathering under Cyril, but as the faithful anti-Cyril bishops suffering for the true faith. It is an inventive use of that tradition, stretching back to Eusebius, that the bishops of Nicaea had faithfully suffered persecution, and, indeed, had arrived at the council still bearing the wounds of imperial violence upon their bodies.[151] In this way, Cyril's council could be deprived of legitimacy, despite its greater numbers, and continuity with Nicaea could be located precisely among those excluded from Cyril's conciliar assembly.[152] Such a strategy was, however, inevitably short-lived, since the convening of John of Antioch's counter-council naturally shifted the anti-Cyrilline appeal to Nicaea back into a conciliar context. We notice again, nonetheless, the problematic flexibility of the idea of 'Nicaea', which could be

[149] Cf. R. M. Price (2012), 'Politics and Bishops' Lists at the First Council of Ephesus', *AHC* 44.2, 394–408.

[150] *ACO* I.4, 27:30–3 (CC.82): Nota quidem rectae glorificationis [here, following Price, translating δόξα, i.e. 'belief'] est fides, quae a divinis et adorabilibus scripturis ab olim nobis est praedicata; nihilo minus haec ipsa nobis a sanctis patribus tradita est, qui in Nicaena synodo congregate sunt, quorum tot passiones erant pro pietate quot membra.

[151] Cf. Eusebius, *V.C.*, III.15; Theodoret, *H.E.* I.10 (Theodoret may have been the author of the protest).

[152] Conversely, Cyril's supporters consistently emphasized the numerical superiority of their council as proof of its greater authority—Dalmatius (enthusiastically!) put the number at six thousand: *ACO* I.1.2, 68:32–3 (V.67).

used to justify the position of the godly minority *contra mundum* just as easily as it could justify the position of the conciliar majority.

A few days later, Nestorius mounted a further attack on Cyril's council in his report to Theodosius.[153] His primary concern remained to condemn the Cyrilline gathering as fundamentally contrary to Nicaea, and so as invalid both doctrinally and as a council.[154] Cyril, Nestorius contended, had failed to follow the emperor's instructions to 'confirm the faith of the holy fathers convened at Nicaea', but had rather 'shunned a fitting and concordant profession of the faith'.[155] Cyril's attempt to demonstrate that his *Letter* was the true expression of the faith of Nicaea was thus easily construed as an impious attempt to supplant Nicaea by promulgating his own doctrinal innovations. For Nestorius, this automatically rendered Cyril's assembly illegitimate, since 'the many councils that took place subsequently [after Nicaea] did not presume to innovate in its regard, but rather laid down complete fidelity to it'.[156] The session of 22 June, in other words, was not recognizable as a truly 'Nicene' council, for it had sought to add to the Creed rather than to confirm it. The frequency of this kind of attack by Cyril's opponents during late June and July 431 demonstrates the difficulty inherent in establishing a particular interpretation of Nicaea as authoritative, without thereby being accused of heretical addition.

The first session of the Easterners' council under John of Antioch (26 June) provided a fresh opportunity to articulate an anti-Cyrilline construal of Nicaea. It was, after all, necessary for this much smaller episcopal gathering to demonstrate convincingly that *it* was the authoritative guardian of the faith of Nicaea, and so was the true council of Ephesus. The written proceedings of 26 June thus explicitly contrast the procedurally dubious opening of Cyril's session with the Easterners' meticulous fidelity to the emperor's instructions: Candidianus formally reads of the imperial *sacra*, demonstrating that the real council was now in session. In this way, Cyril's gathering could be condemned as a tyrannous and illegitimate venture which convened illegally, acted with violence, and pronounced its verdict 'without any hearing, examination, or investigation'.[157] In contrast, the Easterners could portray themselves as concerned with the preservation of the orthodox faith and with the establishment

[153] *ACO* I.1.5, 13–15 (V.146).

[154] Neither Nestorius nor the Easterners ever dignified Cyril's sessions with the name 'council' during 431.

[155] *ACO* I.1.5, 13:31–2 (V.146.1): *καὶ κοινῆι ψήφωι κυρῶσαι τῶν ἁγίων πατέρων τὴν πίστιν τῶν ἐν Νικαίαι συναθροισθέντων* […]; *ACO* I.1.5, 14:10 (V.146.3): *μὲν τὴν ἀκόλουθον καὶ σύμφωνον τῆς πίστεως ὁμολογίαν.*

[156] *ACO* I.1.5, 13:32–4 (V.146.1): *καὶ γὰρ πολλαὶ μετ᾽ ἐκείνην γενόμεναι σύνοδοι οὐδὲν καινοτομῆσαι κατ᾽ ἐκείνης ἐτόλμησαν, ἀλλ᾽ ἐκείνηι πάντηι ἐμμένειν ἐνομοθέτησαν.*

[157] *ACO* I.1.5, 120:30–2 (V.151.8): *Ἴσασι πάντες οἱ συμπαρόντες μοι θεοσεβέστατοι ἐπίσκοποι ὡς χωρίς τινος κρίσεως καὶ ἐξετάσεως καὶ ζητήσεως τὰ παρ᾽ αὐτῶν τετύπωται.*

of peace, and as conducting a 'precise examination and confirmation of the pious faith of the holy and blessed fathers of Nicaea' in dutiful obedience to the emperor's command.[158]

The self-presentation of the Easterners' first session, then, precisely mirrored that of Cyril's on 22 June: both sought to legitimize their activity not only through observing procedural niceties but also through their claim to be the true defenders of Nicaea, and to demonstrate that fidelity by authoritatively 'confirming' the Nicene faith. However, whereas Cyril had sought to advance a *positive* as well as a *negative* construal of the Nicene faith in his session (i.e. that his own doctrine was Nicaea's authentic expression, as well as Nestorius' doctrine being a false one), the Easterners' session merely condemned Cyril's reading of the Creed as innovatory, and so heretical. This more limited strategy may have reflected the Easterners' own internal divisions regarding the degree to which Nestorius' doctrine could be affirmed as truly Nicene, or at least the growing realization (among John and others) of its idiosyncrasies. Tellingly, Nestorius was absent from all the sessions of the Easterners, and the clear focus of John's council throughout the summer of 431 was *not* the defence of Nestorius' particular theology, but the attack upon Cyril's *Anathemas:* it was, at heart, anti-Cyrillianism, not pro-Nestorianism, that unified these bishops.

Notably, the accusation that Cyril's council had formally promulgated his *Anathemas*—which would later come to play a central role in the Easterners' strategy—is absent from the 26 June proceedings.[159] Instead, Cyril is accused of gathering in haste precisely in order to '*prevent* an examination of the heretical false doctrine that we found in the Chapters'.[160] The Easterners had construed the imperial order of convocation, in other words, as requiring the confirmation of the Nicene faith via the judgement that the *Anathemas* were contrary to it.[161] The original and intended purpose of the Council of Ephesus was thus to demonstrate that Cyril, not Nestorius, was the enemy of Nicaea.[162] And since, in not retracting his *Anathemas*, Cyril remained guilty of having

[158] *ACO* I.1.5, 121:14–15 (V.151.10): *τῆς ἀκριβοῦς ἐρεύνης καὶ βεβαιώσεως τῆς εὐσεβοῦς πίστεως τῶν ἁγίων καὶ μακαρίων πατέρων τῶν ἐν Νικαίαι τῆς Βιθυνίας συνεληλυθότων.*

[159] Rather than reflecting what the Easterners initially believed to have actually transpired in the session of 22 June, the claim thus likely represents a subsequent exploitation of the *textual* inclusion of Cyril's *Third Letter* in his *acta*; de Halleux, for instance, argues convincingly that the *Third Letter* was not even read at the session of 22 June: A. de Halleux (1992), 'Les douze chapitres cyrilliens au concile d'Ephèse (430–433)', *RTL* 23.4, 425–58.

[160] *ACO* I.1.5, 121:28–31 (V.151.11): *ὥστε τὴν αἱρετικὴν κακοδοξίαν μὴ ζητηθῆναι, ἣν ἐν τοῖς κεφαλαίοις εὕρομεν τοῖς ἀποσταλεῖσι πρώιην εἰς τὴν βασιλίδα πόλιν ὑπὸ τοῦ εὐλαβεστάτου Κυρίλλου τοῦ ἐπισκόπου, ὧν τὰ πλεῖστα συμβαίνει τῆι Ἀρείου καὶ Ἀπολιναρίου καὶ Εὐνομίου δυσσεβείαι*; cf. *ACO* I.1.5, 123:2–3 (V.151.15).

[161] Cf. *ACO* I.1.5, 123:2–3 (V.151.15).

[162] If Cyril had known that the formal conciliar examination of his *Anathemas* was a widely held expectation among his episcopal opponents, it may help to explain his haste in attempting to convene the council before those bishops arrived.

impiously added to the Nicene faith, the Easterners' assembly demanded that he and his bishops 'anathematize the heretical Chapters' and so 'profess adhesion to the Creed issued by the most holy fathers assembled at Nicaea, introducing nothing different from it or alien to piety'.[163] In this way, the imperial instructions could finally be fulfilled, Cyril's *Anathemas* condemned, and the faith of Nicaea confirmed.

Both Cyril and John's first conciliar sessions, then, staked their claim to conciliar legitimacy and doctrinal orthodoxy on the basis that they had truly 'confirmed' Nicaea—but both worked with divergent understandings of what this actually involved. For Cyril, it meant 'confirming' that the Nicene Creed was falsely interpreted by Nestorius, and truly interpreted by himself, through a documentary comparison of their two letters; for the Easterners, it meant 'confirming' Nicaea against the heretical innovations of the *Anathemas*. It was the Easterners, indeed, who would come most strongly to utilize the potent polemic of 'no additions to Nicaea'—and it was Cyril who had, at least initially, to defend himself from this charge. The cry of 'sola Nicaea', then, first found prominence not in the later miaphysite attacks on Chalcedon, but in the early Antiochene critique of Cyril at Ephesus.[164] The 'no additions' slogan, in other words, was not the hallmark of a particular doctrinal position, but was rather a flexible rhetorical strategy that a range of parties could deploy to portray their opponents' doctrine as unorthodox. In this way, the Easterners sought to oppose the 'Nicene' credentials of Cyril's council by associating it with heterodox theological innovation (mirroring Cyril's own depiction of Nestorius' doctrine), and so contrasting such wordy falsehood with their own simple profession of, and fidelity to, the Nicene faith.[165]

The Easterners further developed their counter-construal of 'Nicaea' a few days later, in a tranche of documents composed immediately after the second session of their council.[166] While Cyril went about collecting episcopal signatures to add to the written proceedings of 22 June, the Easterners sharpened their critique of those bishops involved in Cyril's session, lambasting the 'heretical opinions of Cyril which they had the presumption to confirm with their signatures'.[167] In this way, the proceedings of 22 June could be portrayed as the imposition of one man's doctrine, rather than as the confirmation of the

[163] *ACO* I.1.5, 122:3–6 (V.151.12): *ὡς ἂν τὸ οἰκεῖον ἐπιγνόντες πλημμέλημα τά τε αἱρετικὰ τοῦ Κυρίλλου κεφάλαια ἀναθεματίσωσι καὶ τῆι ἐκτεθείσηι πίστει παρὰ τῶν ἁγιωτάτων πατέρων τῶν ἐν Νικαίαι συναθροισθέντων ἐμμένειν καθομολογήσωσι μηδὲν ἕτερον αὐτῆι ἢ ξένον τῆς εὐσεβείας ἐπεισάγοντες* […]; cf. *ACO* I.1.5, 124:24–5 (V.152). The accusation here that Cyril had introduced something 'different from' the Creed at the 22 June session may also refer to his *Second Letter*.

[164] *Contra* Sieben, *Konzilsidee*, 256f.

[165] Cf. *ACO* I.1.5, 122:6–8 (V.151.12).

[166] *ACO* I.1.5, 127–9 (V.155–7); *ACO* I.4, 43–6 (CC.95–6). The focus here remains on Cyril *preventing* the examination of the *Anathemas* rather than on him actively *promulgating* them.

[167] *ACO* I.4, 44:36–7 (CC.96): idcirco agnoscite quod aliqui eorum propter haereticam Cyrilli sententiam, quam confirmare praesumpserunt subscriptionibus suis […].

shared Nicene faith. Indeed, the very act of subscribing to Cyril's session was to be complicit in Cyril's heresy, and so to betray Nicaea. This reminds us, moreover, of the central role of the circulation of texts in the battle over Ephesine conciliar legitimacy. The activity and identity of the Cyrilline council was primarily encountered through documents being read, and this made the contents of those documents (especially with regard to the Nicene Creed) the focus for debate and critique.

The Easterners thus reiterated that they fought for the orthodox faith, which the 'council of the holy fathers assembled at Nicaea confirmed in a written confession and transmitted to us';[168] it was their gathering (the true council) which was the authentic locus of fidelity to the pure Nicene faith, unsullied by Cyrillian additions.[169] It was only through allegiance to the Easterners' council that the Cyrillian bishops could 'recover the faith of the holy fathers who met at Nicaea'; it was only when the *Anathemas* had been themselves anathematized that the Cyrillian bishops could '*sincerely* accept the creed of the holy fathers who convened at Nicaea'.[170] Again we note the mirroring of Cyril's own strategy (as expressed in his *Third Letter*): it was no longer enough *merely* to confess the Creed, it must rather be confessed 'sincerely', that is, according to a particular authoritative interpretation.

By the end of June 431, then, two 'councils' of Ephesus had met, each claiming that they alone had faithfully preserved the faith of Nicaea. This battle over contrasting ideas of Nicaea was the central dynamic driving the dispute between the parties: Nicaea was their common doctrinal locus, and the shared model for the presentation of their own conciliar legitimacy. Moreover, these rival strategies not only developed in parallel, but increasingly mirrored one another: Cyril's council charged Nestorius with falsely interpreting the Creed according to his novel doctrines, while John charged Cyril with adding to the Creed according to his heretical innovations. Both parties also sought to utilize the written records of their proceedings as the primary instrument for expressing their Nicene identity and authority. Indeed, in both cases the authentic affirmation of Nicaea now involved the subscription or affirmation of particular texts—texts which were themselves linked with particular claims to conciliar legitimacy. For Cyril, the authentic affirmation of Nicaea involved subscribing to the written proceedings of 22 June (and the documents cited

[168] *ACO* I.4, 45:6–7 (CC.96): quae sanctorum patrum qui Nicaeam sunt collecti, concilium scripta confessione confirmans usque ad nos et eos qui post nos erunt homines destinavit. Like Cyril, John tried here to make a link between the activity of his council and that of Nicaea itself, since both 'confirmed' the orthodox faith.

[169] *ACO* I.1.5, 127–8 (V.155–6).

[170] *ACO* I.1.5, 128:17–18 (V.156): *τήν τε τῶν ἁγίων πατέρων πίστιν τῶν ἐν Νικαίαι τῆς Βιθυνίας συνελθόντων ἀνακτήσωνται* […]; *ACO* I.1.5, 127:22–3 (V.155): *τὴν πίστιν τῶν ἁγίων πατέρων τῶν ἐν Νικαίαι τῆς Βιθυνίας συναθροισθέντων ἀδόλως καταδέξωνται* […]; cf. Graumann, 'Doctrinal Normation', 27.

therein); for the Easterners, it involved not only subscribing to the Nicene Creed, but also anathematizing the *Anathemas* and denouncing the Cyrilline proceedings.

The evidence of late June, furthermore, suggests that while the Easterners had arguably won the initial rhetorical battle, they were in danger of losing the rhetorical war. The Easterners had managed, in spite of their numerical disadvantage, to 'spin' Cyril's council as procedurally unsound, and the conciliar promulgation of his own writings as a heretical violation of the faith of Nicaea. Indeed, the emperor's letter to the bishops of Ephesus of 29 June, condemning the proceedings of Cyril's assembly, is a remarkable testament to the potency of the Easterners' polemic.[171] However, it was Cyril's conciliar texts that had evinced the greater discursive subtlety. The written account of the session of 22 June offered a flawed, but nonetheless creative, attempt to articulate how 'Nicaea' could convincingly be subjected to a 'rejuvenating reception'. In stark contrast, the Easterners' documents failed to provide a *positive* account of the Nicene faith—they required that Nicaea be confessed 'sincerely', but, other than demanding the condemnation of the *Anathemas*, they did not specify what this sincere confession actually involved.

We turn now to analyse the further development of these opposing Nicene strategies between July and September 431, as the dispute over 'Nicaea' and its authentic expression became increasingly intractable.

The entrenchment of positions from late June onwards represented a significant dilemma for Theodosius. Two rival episcopal gatherings had each claimed full conciliar authority, had each portrayed themselves as committed to the faith of Nicaea, and had each condemned their opponents for betraying it—yet only one could be officially recognized as the place where Christ was present, the Holy Spirit dwelt, and the consensus of the catholic church was embodied. And since neither party had succeeded conclusively in demonstrating that their distinctive 're-reception' of Nicaea was superior to that of their opponents, Theodosius hedged his bets. Accordingly, in his letter of 29 June, he addressed all the bishops as a single group ('the most holy council in Ephesus') and reiterated his earlier instructions: the Creed should be examined, and a decision reached by the 'whole council'.[172] Theodosius evidently hoped that existing divisions could still be repaired, and a peaceable episcopal consensus secured—especially if the troublesome leaders of both parties were confined under house arrest.[173]

[171] *ACO* I.1.3, 9–10 (V.83).

[172] *ACO* I.1.3, 9:26 (V.83): *τῆι κατ᾽ Ἔφεσον ἁγιωτάτηι συνόδωι* […]; *ACO* I.1.3, 10:3–6 (V.83): *ὅθεν δέδοκται τῆι ἡμετέραι θειότητι χώραν μὲν τὴν τοιαύτην μηδαμῶς ἔχειν αὐθεντίαν, τῶν δὲ ἀνακολούθως γεγονότων ἀργούντων τοὺς περὶ τῆς εὐσεβείας λόγους, ὥσπερ ἐδέδοκτο, πρώτως ἐξετασθῆναι καὶ κατὰ τὸ κοινῆι πάσηι τῆι συνόδωι δοκοῦν εἰς τὸν ἑξῆς χρόνον κρατεῖν.*

[173] Theodosius dispatched Count John to implement this strategy, requiring that no bishop was to leave Ephesus until the matter had been resolved.

Yet, without clear imperial approval for either Cyril or John's assembly, both continued to defend their own authority and the unique legitimacy of their particular idea of 'Nicaea'. Many of the strategies deployed in the ensuing campaign were straightforward and predictable—both sides, for instance, accuse the other of acts of violence, intrigue, and bribery, while pointing to their greater clout as a gathering (whether numerically, as Cyril, or in terms of metropolitical representation, as John).[174] Alongside this rather shabby spectacle, however, there remained creative and meaningful attempts to refine further the claims to Nicene fidelity that had begun to be advanced in the rival conciliar sessions of late June.

Cyril's council responded to the imperial letter of 29 June by reiterating that it had dutifully obeyed the imperial task by carrying out an examination of doctrine (thus following in the steps of the 318 fathers), reaching a common mind, and so deposing Nestorius for his heresy. The official proceedings of 22 June, it was claimed, demonstrated the council's observance of due procedure (conducted, indeed, in the presence of Christ Himself), while the Easterners' refusal to join the council betrayed their complicity in Nestorius' heretical doctrines.[175] The council implicitly conceded, however, that its opponents' Nicene self-presentation possessed some support, for 'those who hold heretical opinions contrary to the orthodox faith are clever at disguising their error'.[176] It is evident, indeed, that the Easterners had begun to circulate their own list of countersignatures, perhaps mirroring Cyril's strategy by attaching them to their conciliar proceedings.[177]

The second (10 July) and third (11 July) sessions of Cyril's council sharpened its claims to conciliar legitimacy by carefully recording the support of the newly arrived Roman delegates—Cyril could now claim that his council was truly oecumenical, possessing the support of the Western Church.[178] The episcopal affirmations that follow the citation of Celestine's letter thus

[174] For instance: *ACO* I.1.3, 12 (V.84.4); *ACO* I.I.3, 17 (V.88.2); on the violence at Ephesus, see T. E. Gregory (1979), *Vox Populi: Popular Opinion and Violence in the Religious Controversies of the Fifth Century* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press), 80–100. Cyril's agents were not only active in Ephesus itself during these months, but also in Constantinople, where they helped to 'spin' the news of the council's activity in Cyril's favour: R. M. Price (2014), 'Fact and Fiction, Emperor and Council, in the Coptic Acts of Ephesus', *AHC* 46, 9–26.

[175] *ACO* I.1.3, 10–13 (V.84).

[176] *ACO* I.1.3, 11:33–4 (V.84.4): *δεινοὶ γάρ εἰσιν οἱ ἕτερα παρὰ τὴν ὀρθὴν πίστιν φρονοῦντες συσκιάζειν τὴν πλάνην*; *ACO* I.1.3, 12:16 (V.84.4): *εἰ μὴ αὐτός τε δεινὸς ἦν σχήμασι λόγων ἐπικαλύπτειν ἑαυτοῦ τὴν δυσσέβειαν* [...].

[177] *ACO* I.1.3, 11:34–12:1 (V.84.4): *ὡς καὶ τινὰς τῶν ἁγιωτάτων ἐπισκόπων κρυπτομένης μὲν τῆς πλάνης παρὰ Νεστορίου δελεασθῆναι καὶ προσθέσθαι αὐτῶι τοῖς τε ὑπ' αὐτοῦ πραττομένοις ὑπογράψαι* [...]. Cyril's council claimed that these were *Nestorius*' proceedings, despite his absence from the Easterners' assembly—an attempt to tarnish John's bishops by association.

[178] The inclusion of Celestine's letter also helps to buttress the authority of Cyril's council, since it emphasizes the presence of Christ and the Holy Spirit in conciliar assemblies: *ACO* I.1.3, 55 (V.106.12).

associate St Paul, Celestine, and Cyril as 'fathers' together, speaking with one Spirit-inspired voice.[179] Crucially, this Roman approval was formally established by appending the legates' signatures to the proceedings of 22 June.[180] The Cyrilline conciliar documents, in short, were not static or fixed, but rather represented a kind of rolling corpus, with each fresh addition providing the opportunity to improve and subtly reinterpret what had gone before. Emphasis was placed on the legates having carefully inspected the minutes and found them accurate and legitimate—it is this written document, then, that conveyed the authority and expressed the identity of the Cyrilline council, and which (it claimed) provided the authentic interpretation of the Nicene Creed.[181]

The fourth (16 July) and fifth (17 July) sessions continued this strategy: against the claims of the Easterners, the council maintained that it had confirmed the orthodox faith by examining Nestorius' doctrine and finding it to be in error.[182] John of Antioch was increasingly portrayed as a second Nestorius: he too had persisted in error, ignored legitimate conciliar summonses, and so had been deposed (indeed, by Christ Himself).[183] In this way, the Easterners' circulation of their own decree that Cyril and Memnon had been deposed was countered by the Cyrilline ruling that, as a pretended council, the decrees of the Easterners possessed no validity.[184]

Following these sessions, Cyril's council wrote again to the emperor, asserting once more that the assembled bishops had 'explained to your piety the apostolic faith expounded by the 318 assembled at Nicaea, and deposed Nestorius whose beliefs were contrary to this'.[185] Nicaea was now explicitly appealed to not only as the basis for doctrinal fidelity, but also as a template for conciliar activity:

> formerly too, at the holy and great council of the 318 assembled at Nicaea, there were some likewise who stood aloof from that great council, fearing its penalties, and they were not deemed a council by the great emperor Constantine, now

[179] *ACO* I.1.3, 57:24–7 (V.106.19): *Αὕτη δικαία κρίσις. νέωι Παύλωι Κελεστίνωι· νέωι Παύλωι Κυρίλλωι. Κελεστίνωι τῶι φύλακι τῆς πίστεως. Κελεστίνωι τῶι ὁμοψύχωι τῆς συνόδου. Κελεστίνωι εὐχαριστεῖ πᾶσα ἡ σύνοδος. εἷς Κελεστῖνος, εἷς Κύριλλος· μία πίστις τῆς συνόδου, μία πίστις τῆς οἰκουμένης.*

[180] *ACO* I.1.3, 63 (V.106.36–9).

[181] For instance. at the session of 11 July, a fresh summary was given of the proceedings of 22 June: *ACO* I.1.3, 60 (V.106.30); and again in the council's reply to Celestine after the session of 17 July: *ACO* I.1.3, 6 (V.82.5).

[182] *ACO* I.1.3, 15–21 (V.87–89.12); 21–26 (V.89.13–21).

[183] Nestorius was now incorporated into the genealogy of heretics: *ACO* I.1.3, 22 (V.89.13).

[184] Rather, John and his bishops were defectors from the true council: *ACO* I.1.3, 26 (V.91.1).

[185] *ACO* I.1.3, 28:25–9:2 (V.92.1): *τῆι ὑμῶν κατεστήσαμεν εὐσεβείαι τήν τε ἀποστολικὴν πίστιν, ἣν καὶ οἱ ἐπὶ τῆς Νικαίας τριακόσιοι δέκα καὶ ὀκτὼ συναχθέντες ἐξέθεντο, φανερὰν κατεστήσαμεν τῆι ὑμῶν εὐσεβείαι καὶ τὸν ἐναντία ταύτηι φρονήσαντα Νεστόριον καθείλομεν* […].

> among the saints, but were ordered to stand trial for separating themselves and rejecting the common voice of those holy bishops […].[186]

This was a somewhat eccentric attempt to apply Nicaea to the contemporary context, since there is no record of a rival or minority council in 325, even among the various legends surrounding the council that subsequently developed. It may refer to those few bishops who refused to accept the council's decisions[187] or possibly to the Novatian Acesius, whom Socrates depicted as standing aloof from the decision of the council,[188] but these are both imperfect fits. It seems more likely that this statement represents a straightforward invention of tradition, intended to show history repeating itself: Cyril's council was the true successor to Nicaea because of, rather than in spite of, its experience of opposition. In this way, the continuing presence of the Easterners' rival council became a means of further validating, rather than undermining, the Cyrilline council's 'Nicene' identity, while a heavy hint was given regarding how Theodosius (the new Constantine) should act. The strategy again suggests that Cyril's council understood itself not merely as 'confirming' Nicaea but in some sense participating in Nicaea's unique authority, recapitulating or re-expressing Nicaea in the present.

Cyril's most ambitious attempt to refine his idea of Nicaea is found in his council's sixth session (22 July).[189] The written proceedings of this session seek retrospectively to reinterpret (and improve upon) the proceedings of 22 June, while also making a fresh attempt to demonstrate the sole legitimacy of the Cyrilline 'reading' of Nicaea. Significant adjustments were made in the light of the Easterners' powerful accusation that Cyril had betrayed the Nicene faith through addition on 22 June. So, for instance, the council's own authority remained clearly stated, but was now set explicitly within an emphatic assertion of unswerving fidelity to Nicaea as the sole and sufficient locus of the orthodox faith. Thus the council states its primary purpose as being to declare 'the authority and validity of the faith expounded through the Holy Spirit by the holy fathers who in their time convened in the city of Nicaea, being 318 in number'.[190] The Nicene Creed is cited in full once again, at the very beginning of proceedings, as 'sufficient to benefit the world under heaven', and its enemies

[186] *ACO* I.1.3, 30:15–22 (V.92.5): *καὶ πάλαι ἐπὶ τῆς ἁγίας καὶ μεγάλης συνόδου τῶν τιη τῶν ἐπὶ τῆς Νικαέων συνειλεγμένων τινὰς οὕτως ἀποστῆναι τῆς μεγάλης ἐκείνης συνόδου, δεδοικότας τὸ ἐξ αὐτῆς ἐπιτίμιον, καὶ μήτε κριθῆναι σύνοδον τούτους ὑπὸ τοῦ μεγάλου καὶ ἐν ἁγίοις βασιλέως Κωνσταντίνου, ἀλλὰ καὶ κελευσθῆναι δίκας ὑποσχεῖν ὑπὲρ ὧν ἀποσχίσαντες τὴν τῶν ἁγίων ἐκείνων ἐπισκόπων συμφωνίαν ἠρνήσαντο* […].

[187] Secundus of Ptolemais and Theonas of Marmarica (Soc., *H.E.* I.9).

[188] Soc., *H.E.* I.10—although this is only one bishop (not a group of them), and there is no reference to a trial.

[189] *ACO* I.1.7, 84–117 (CA.73–9).

[190] *ACO* I.1.7, 95:22–96:1 (CA.76.1): *καὶ συνεδρευούσης ὁριζούσης τε κρατεῖν καὶ βεβαίαν εἶναι τὴν πίστιν τὴν ἐκτεθεῖσαν διὰ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος παρὰ τῶν ἁγίων πατέρων τῶν κατὰ καιροὺς ἐν τῆι Νικαέων πόλει συνειλεγμένων, ὄντων τὸν ἀριθμὸν τριακοσίων δέκα καὶ ὀκτώ* […].

(Nestorius and the Easterners) are identified as those who 'pretend to profess and accept it, but in fact misinterpret the force of the ideas according to their own opinions, and distort the truth'.[191] Nicaea cannot be confessed rightly, in other words, unless one's own opinions are renounced in favour of the hallowed interpretation of the fathers.

Having established this, Cyril goes on to elucidate that 'royal road' of the Spirit by providing the long list of patristic citations from 22 June (with a few extra ones added for good measure[192]). These 'show convincingly in what way they [the fathers] understood the Creed', so that 'all who hold the correct and irreproachable faith may also understand, interpret and proclaim it accordingly'.[193] Cyril thus reordered the material from 22 June to give greater conceptual coherence to his argument: the patristic citations, which had been placed somewhat awkwardly in the first session, now had a clear function in providing the hermeneutical key for reading the Creed correctly. By contrast, Cyril's *Second Letter* and *Third Letter* have entirely disappeared from view, further evidence of the effectiveness by which their prominence in the first session had been 'spun' as heretical additions to the Creed. The patristic citations, in this sense, have displaced the *Second Letter* as the authoritative commentary on the credal text.

The aim of the 22 July proceedings was, however, not purely defensive. For Cyril also sought to broaden the attack on Nestorius to include all who shared his heretical opinions, including (implicitly) the unnamed author of the 'falsified creed', whom Cyril knew to be Nestorius' 'father', Theodore of Mopsuestia.[194] In this sense, then, the 22 July session represents a renewed attempt to condemn the entire Antiochene Christological tradition, just as Cyril had earlier sought to achieve through his *Anathemas*. This was accomplished by exploiting a petition from the presbyter Charisius, which testified to

[191] *ACO* I.1.7, 89:14–16 (CA.74.4): *Τῆι μὲν οὖν ἁγίαι ταύτηι πίστει πάντας συντίθεσθαι προσήκει· ἔχει γὰρ εὐσεβῶς καὶ ἀποχρώντως εἰς ὠφέλειαν τῆς ὑπ' οὐρανόν. ἐπειδὴ δὲ τινὲς προσποιοῦνται μὲν ὁμολογεῖν αὐτὴν καὶ συντίθεσθαι, παρερμηνεύουσι δὲ τῶν ἐννοιῶν τὴν δύναμιν ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτοῖς δοκοῦν καὶ σοφίζονται τὴν ἀλήθειαν* [...], echoing Cyril's language in *Contra Nest.* I.5 (*ACO* I.1.6, 25:37–9), and in his *Third Letter*. The text of the Creed is identical to that of 22 June, further evidence of Cyril's emphasis on one particular textual form as alone authentic. This remained in tension with the more fluid use of the creed in non-conciliar contexts, as is (rather embarrassingly) clear from the wildly different form of Nicene Creed that Charisius includes in his petition: *ACO* I.1.7, 89:17–20 (CA.74.3). The irony of this session's so-called 'Canon 7' is thus that it was formulated in order to condemn Nestorius for adding to the Creed, yet it was justified on the basis of an appeal to a version of the Creed that itself contained many additions.

[192] *ACO* I.1.7, 94–5 (CA.75.19–22), cf. Graumann, *Kirche*, 400–9.

[193] *ACO* I.1.7, 89:17–20 (CA.74.4): *ἐδέησεν ἀναγκαίως ἁγίων πατέρων καὶ ὀρθοδόξων παραθέσθαι χρήσεις πληροφορῆσαι δυναμένας τίνα τε τρόπον νενοήκασιν αὐτὴν καὶ κηρῦξαι τεθαρρήκασιν, ὥστε δηλονότι καὶ πάντας τοὺς ὀρθὴν καὶ ἀμώμητον ἔχοντας πίστιν οὕτω καὶ νοεῖν καὶ ἑρμηνεύειν καὶ κηρύττειν αὐτήν.*

[194] Cf. Cyril, *Epp.* 72, 91.

how Nestorius had forced an adulterated creed on a group of converts.[195] This allowed Cyril to reinforce the point that it was Nestorius, not himself, who was in fact guilty of adding to the Creed, and was thus an enemy of Nicaea.[196] Cyril's rhetoric here, however, was not quite able to mask a more prosaic truth. For it is clear from Charisius' plaint that Nestorius, just like Cyril, had understood the need for the Creed to be properly interpreted and expounded (especially in the context of the reception of converts from heretical sects), and so had provided a more thorough exposition to which assent was to be given. To read the Creed aright, Nestorius had in this instance turned to the writings of his father Theodore, just as Cyril now turned to the citations of his select 'fathers'.

The crisis of Nicaea at Ephesus, we are reminded again, was not about whether the Nicene Creed needed interpretation, but about how one interpretation could be shown to be solely authoritative. In the 22 July proceedings, indeed, Cyril not only advanced a particular interpretation of Nicaea as alone orthodox, but a particular *interpretive strategy* as well. He sought to establish a carefully selected series of supplementary texts that provided (via the Spirit's inspiration) an authoritative hermeneutical key for reading the Nicene Creed rightly. It was a strategy that effectively exploited the opportunities for the subtle selection, organization and placement of texts provided by conciliar *acta*. Moreover, it took aim at the more widespread interpretive strategy (represented in the Creed associated with Constantinople 381, Charisius' Creed, and Theodore's 'exposition'), whereby the credal text was itself expanded and modified in order to bring out more fully its meaning—and indeed condemned this hermeneutic as involving illegitimate additions to the Creed.

All this was crystallized in a ruling (the so-called 'Canon 7') that would cast a long shadow over later councils. It stated that 'no one is allowed to produce or write or compose another creed beside the one laid down with the aid of the Holy Spirit by the holy fathers assembled at Nicaea'.[197] We note again the delicacy of these attempts to 're-receive' Nicaea in a new context. Through the 22 July proceedings, culminating in 'Canon 7', Cyril sought to perfect the 'double movement', or rhetorical sleight of hand, by which a fresh reading of the Creed could be enshrined as uniquely authoritative, while simultaneously denying that any change to the faith of Nicaea (still less heretical 'addition') had been perpetrated. In formally reaffirming Nicaea, the content of that reaffirmation itself became intrinsic to the (unchanging) Nicene

[195] *ACO* I.1.7, 96–105 (CA.76.2–32); cf. Millar, 'Repentant Heretics', 111 ff.

[196] The long florilegium of citations from Nestorius' writings (as quoted in the proceedings of 22 June) was now placed more clearly in the 22 July *acta* precisely to make this point.

[197] *ACO* I.1.7, 105:20–2 (CA.77): *ὥρισεν ἡ ἁγία σύνοδος ἑτέραν πίστιν μηδενὶ ἐξεῖναι προφέρειν ἢ γοῦν συγγράφειν ἢ συντιθέναι παρὰ τὴν ὁρισθεῖσαν παρὰ τῶν ἁγίων πατέρων τῶν ἐν τῆι Νικαέων συναχθέντων σὺν ἁγίωι πνεύματι*; cf. Graumann, 'Doctrinal Normation', 31–2.

confession. Church historians often assume that progress is made through being progressive, but here the opposite was arguably the case: it was by being so *conservative* with regard to Nicaea that Cyril was at his most innovative in the construal of the Nicene faith, and it was by creatively refashioning the very idea of 'Nicaea' that Cyril sought to resolve the problems that the inadequacy of Nicaea had itself created.

The documentary record of Cyril's sixth session has been examined at this point on the basis of its claim to date to 22 July. It is very likely, however, that the written proceedings actually originate from considerably later, and so their influence on the events of mid 431 should not be overplayed. The lack of individual episcopal interventions recorded in the proceedings, and the dominance of long texts that had already featured in the 22 June proceedings, make it probable that the session was substantially a literary production.[198] Cyril himself subsequently seems to have acknowledged that the documentary record of 22 July was at least in part an editorial creation.[199] Most significantly of all, the silence of the Easterners regarding the session over the coming months is deafening—it is highly implausible that such an outrageous attack upon the memory of Theodore (of precisely the sort that, several years later, would provoke a major controversy between Cyril and John) would not have been commented upon had it been known. Rather, the focus of the polemic on *both* sides throughout the late summer remains solidly upon the record of 22 June. For these reasons, it will be contended in the next chapter that the 22 July document finds its actual origins in a post-431 reshaping of the character of the Ephesine council, and rises to real prominence only as part of an innovative strategy of Eutyches and Dioscorus in the late 440s.

The Easterners spent July continuing to assert their own conciliar legitimacy and Nicene fidelity. They emphasized that in order truly to fulfil the imperial instructions and 'confirm' Nicaea, Cyril's heretical doctrine (as expressed in the *Anathemas*) and his tyrannous assembly had both to be clearly rejected.[200] The Easterners thus claimed to stand solely on Nicaea—yet just as much as Cyril they had imported a set of interpretive assumptions about what the authentic confession of Nicaea actually involved. Cyril was depicted as standing condemned on the basis of his blasphemous writings, just as Cyril had used Nestorius' works. And just as Cyril had invited Nestorius to

[198] Cf. L. Abramowski (2004), 'Die Sitzung des Konzils von Ephesus am 22. Juli 431: Über die Befestigung des Symbols der heiligen Väter in Nicäa und über den vom Presbyter Charisius übergebenen Libellus', *ZKG* 115.3, 382–90; R. M. Price (2012), 'The Nicene Creed and the Reception of Converts at the First Council of Ephesus', *AHC* 44.1, 11–26, calls the written proceedings 'exceedingly curious' (p. 14), and suggests possible stages for their editorial composition (including a defence of the genuineness of the original subscription list, p. 18).

[199] Cf. Cyril, *Ep.* 33.8 (*ACO* I.1.7, 149:6–8 [CA.107]), *Ep.* 55.6 (*ACO* I.1.4, 50 [V.135]); further analysis in the following chapter.

[200] Cf. *ACO* I.1.5, 132–3 (V.161), 133–5 (V.163).

defend his writings on 22 June, so the Easterners now invited Cyril to present himself at their council and defend his *Anathemas*.[201] Indeed, the Easterners' mirroring of Cyril's use of Nicaea even extended to their quoting of the Nicene Creed in full, and placing it at the start of their own conciliar documentation.[202] Similarly, Cyril's attempt to gather signatures for his conciliar proceedings was matched by the Easterners' desire that bishops should sign those documents in which they had cited the Creed. Nonetheless, in certain regards the Easterners' Nicene construal continued to lag behind Cyril's presentation—they still lacked a *positive* doctrinal articulation of what the full confession of the Nicene faith involved, and there was no equivalent development of the 'father' concept in their documents.[203]

In his *sacra* of early August, Theodosius persisted in his deliberate ambiguity about which gathering was the true council of Ephesus by accepting the depositions of Nestorius, Cyril, and Memnon.[204] He also strengthened the link between Nicaea and Ephesus by invoking his predecessor Constantine—for Theodosius was eager to emerge, just as his illustrious forebear had done, with a successful and victorious council.[205] Cyril's assembly, predictably, responded in protest at this 'mixing of our names with those who have defected from the oecumenical council',[206] and proceeded to make the following intriguing statement:

> And so we entreat your rule, dedicated to God, that the most holy and most God-beloved bishops Cyril and Memnon be restored to the holy council, since they have in no way been condemned from the canons, and that the faith be preserved inviolate—the faith that was engraved on your soul by the Holy Spirit, being handed down to you from your forebears, and which in the minutes of the proceedings against Nestorius that we previously reported has been notably clarified, pride of place being given to the creed of the 318 most holy fathers at Nicaea, while the whole proceedings relating to him are sufficient to expose the impiety of our opponents, and to present the orthodox faith, which up till this day you have in all circumstances been zealous to protect.[207]

[201] *ACO* I.1.5, 131 (V.159). [202] *ACO* I.1.5, 133–5 (V.163).

[203] Nestorius attempted to undermine Cyril's claim to follow the fathers by suggesting that some of the names that Cyril quoted were in fact heretics: *ACO* I.4, 53 (CC.103).

[204] *ACO* I.1.3, 31–2 (V.93). [205] *ACO* I.1.3, 32 (V.93.3).

[206] *ACO* I.1.3, 32:34–33:1 (V.94.3): *κἀκεῖνο δὲ ἡμᾶς οὐ μικρῶς ἔθλιψεν ἐκ συναρπαγῆς γενέσθαι φαινόμενον τὸ τοὺς ἀποστατήσαντας ἀπὸ τῆς οἰκουμενικῆς συνόδου τοὺς περὶ Ἰωάννην τὸν Ἀντιοχείας* […].

[207] *ACO* I.1.3, 33:14–22 (V.94.3) *καὶ δεόμεθα τῆς τῶι θεῶι ἀνακειμένης ὑμῶν βασιλείας τοὺς μὲν ἁγιωτάτους καὶ θεοφιλεστάτους ἐπισκόπους Κύριλλον καὶ Μέμνονα ἀποδοθῆναι τῆι ἁγίαι συνόδωι, οὐδαμῶς ἀπὸ τῶν κανόνων κατακεκριμένους, τὴν δὲ πίστιν φυλαχθῆναι ἀσάλευτον, ἥτις καὶ τῆι ὑμετέραι ὑπὸ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος καταγέγραπται ψυχῆι ἐκ προγόνων ὑμῖν παραδεδομένη καὶ ἐν τοῖς παρ᾽ ἡμῶν πάλαι ἀνενηνεγμένοις ὑπομνήμασι τοῖς κατὰ Νεστορίου πραχθεῖσι σφόδρα σεσαφήνισται, προκειμένης μὲν τῆς πίστεως τῶν ἐν Νικαίαι ἁγιωτάτων πατέρων τῶν τιη, πάσης δὲ τῆς ἐπ᾽ αὐτῶι πράξεως ἱκανῆς οὔσης διελέγξαι μὲν τὴν τῶν ἐναντίων ἀσέβειαν, παραστῆσαι δὲ τὴν ὀρθόδοξον πίστιν, ἣν μέχρι τοῦ νῦν φυλάξαι διὰ πάντων ἐσπουδάσατε.*

Three elements are worth noting. Firstly, Cyril's council makes explicit a claim implicit in its proceedings of 22 June—that it has not only 'confirmed' the faith, but 'notably clarified' it. This is to assert a very high authority for Cyril's council: it has not merely 'passed on' the Nicene faith, but has authoritatively re-expressed and 'clarified' it, and so participates in that great council's unique status. Secondly, the central locus of the council's doctrinal clarification is not merely Cyril's *Second Letter*, but the written proceedings themselves. The authority to interpret Nicaea correctly, in other words, was now located not primarily in a particular 'father' (such as Cyril), nor even in the Creed itself (though it retains 'pride of place'), but in the text of the conciliar proceedings. To reject *this document* is to reject Nicaea itself.[208] Thirdly, the council again makes recourse to the Holy Spirit—to appeal to the Spirit's work in Theodosius' soul is perhaps to encourage him to open his eyes to the Spirit-inspired 'royal road' of orthodox interpretation of Nicaea, which is of course precisely what the 22 June proceedings claimed to present.

The Easterners, by contrast, interpreted the imperial *sacra* as a validation of their own Nicene credentials. They congratulated Theodosius for thus affirming 'the use, as rule and norm, of the Creed formerly issued by the fathers at Nicaea, which, containing nothing defective or superfluous, presents salvation in summary, comprehending in a few words everything that the divine scriptures have handed down to us about piety, and banishing the beliefs of those who want to innovate for us and have wandered off into error'.[209] Thus, whereas Cyril's council defended the need to 'clarify' Nicaea, the Easterners' continued to demand subscription to the Nicene Creed alone: they portrayed the choice before the bishops as subscribing to the *Anathemas* (i.e. following Cyril), or subscribing to the undefiled Nicene Creed (i.e. following them). To subscribe to the Creed, indeed, was automatically to reject the *Anathemas* as a heretical addition.

Moreover, the Easterners now at last attempted to provide a clear *positive* account of Nicaea's authentic meaning. Properly read, they argued, the Creed gave 'a precise definition of the economy'.[210] Yet rather than flesh out this claim, they simply listed a series of characteristic Antiochene Christological emphases as self-evidently in accord with Nicaea, and then quickly and

[208] The lack of any reference to the 22 July proceedings, which would have considerably helped Cyril's argument here, is further reason to doubt the dating of the 22 July document—Graumann, 'Doctrinal Normation', 36, refers to the silence in these documents as 'noteworthy and puzzling'.

[209] *ACO* I.1.7, 69:20–3 (CA.48.2): *κανόνι δὲ καὶ γνώμονι χρήσασθαι τῆι ἐν Νικαίαι ὑπὸ τῶν πατέρων ἐκτεθείσηι πάλαι ποτὲ πίστει, ἥτις, οὔτε ἐλλιπές τι οὔτε περιττὸν ἔχουσα, σύντομον τὴν σωτηρίαν χαρίζεται, ῥήμασιν ὀλίγοις τὸ πᾶν διαλαβοῦσα τῶν ὅσα αἱ θεῖαι γραφαὶ ἡμῖν περὶ εὐσεβείας παραδεδώκασιν.*

[210] *ACO* I.1.7, 70:3 (CA.48.4): *καὶ περὶ τῆς οἰκονομίας τοὺς ἀκριβεῖς παρέδωκεν ὅρους* [...].

nervously asserted that such doctrines did not constitute an addition to the Creed.[211] The Easterners' position, in short, continued to rely on a rather under-developed claim to stand solely on Nicaea—they showed more skill in critiquing Cyril's idea of 'Nicaea' than in convincingly articulating their own.

The failure of Count John's attempt to achieve agreement through a joint settlement of faith revealed the entrenchment of positions by August 431.[212] It also demonstrated the inadequacy of the Nicene Creed itself to act as the point of unity—for the bare text, left uninterpreted, was unable to enshrine conclusively either of the groups' particular theological emphases.[213] Indeed, Cyril's council had already decisively set its face against any such simplistic affirmation, as vulnerable to Nestorius' interpretive trickery.[214] For both Cyril and the Easterners, true fidelity to Nicaea now required subscription to particular conciliar documents in which the Creed was authentically expounded, and in which the authority of the council of Nicaea was presented afresh. A petition of Cyril-supporting clergy in Constantinople showed once again how closely Nicaea and Ephesus were being associated. It implored the emperor: 'as you bring back to mind the love of your ancestors for the church, and how each of them obeyed the council of holy fathers that took place in their time and by means of legislation to confirm the decrees they had issued expressed their respect for them, so may you in your turn be zealous to have the same opinion about the holy council that you have now convened'.[215] Following Nicaea, in other words, meant following its authoritative conciliar successor.[216] The appeal to Nicaea, however, remained so flexible that even being imprisoned allowed Cyril to claim he was suffering for the faith just as Athanasius had done against Arius![217]

Competing ideas of 'Nicaea' were also central to the subsequent late-summer colloquia in Chalcedon, which represented a final, desperate attempt

[211] *ACO* I.1.7, 70 (CA.48.4–6). The Easterners also here affirm the Theotokos as orthodox—a reminder that it was not the central issue of dispute at Ephesus. Even so, Cyril perhaps accurately suggests that divisions remained over the appellation among the Easterners: *ACO* I.1.3, 45–6 (V.100). The doctrinal material in this section of the document, including the assertion of the dual consubstantiality of the Son, would later come to prominence as the basis of the 'Formula of Reunion' of 433 (on which, see in particular Chapter 4).

[212] *ACO* I.1.3, 45–6 (V.100).

[213] The Easterners' description of Count John's instructions suggests that the proposed 'joint statement of faith' was the Nicene Creed itself: *ACO* I.1.7, 74:26–7 (CA.63.2).

[214] Cf. *ACO* I.1.3, 47:25–7 (V.102).

[215] *ACO* I.1.3, 50:15–19 (V.103): *ἀλλὰ τὴν τῶν προγόνων ὑμῶν περὶ τὴν ἐκκλησίαν στοργὴν ἀναλαβόντες κατὰ νοῦν καὶ ὅπως ἕκαστος ἐκείνων τῇι κατὰ τοὺς οἰκείους καιροὺς γενομένηι συνόδωι τῶν ἁγίων πατέρων ἐπειθάρχησε καὶ τῇι διὰ τὸ τοὺς ὅρους τοὺς παρ' αὐτῶν τεθέντας ὀχυρῶσαι νομοθεσίαι τὴν περὶ αὐτοὺς αἰδῶ διέδειξαν, οὕτω καὶ αὐτοὶ τὰ ἴσα περὶ τὴν νῦν παρ' ὑμῶν συγκροτηθεῖσαν ἁγίαν σύνοδον φρονῆσαι προθυμήθητε.*

[216] This association was also encouraged by the Cyrilline council's use of the canons of Nicaea to guide their various jurisdictional rulings, for instance: *ACO* I.1.7, 118–22 (CA.81).

[217] *ACO* I.1.3, 74–5 (V.116).

to find a solution to the Ephesine conflict. Both parties gave clear instructions to their appointed delegates regarding the particular construal of 'Nicaea' that they were to articulate and defend. Cyril's men were told to refuse to share communion with John of Antioch (as the deposed leader of a schismatic assembly), and to require their opponents to 'sign the deposition of Nestorius'.[218] If this subscription was modelled on the pattern used for the Roman envoys, then what was demanded was, in fact, subscription to the entire proceedings of 22 June, including Cyril's construal of the Nicene faith contained therein.[219]

For the Easterners, by contrast, the recourse to Nicaea in the instructions to their delegates appears to have been motivated by the desire both to win back imperial favour[220] and also, crucially, to help paper over the divisions within their own ranks. Tellingly, Alexander of Hierapolis, an implacable supporter of Nestorius, added his own personal orders: 'if you transact anything in accordance with the Creed expounded by the holy fathers of Nicaea, involving no insertions into the Creed of the holy fathers, and also a rejection of the heretical Chapters of Cyril of Alexandria, I agree to it'.[221] The Easterners' emphasis on 'Nicaea alone', in other words, served as a rallying point vague enough to satisfy 'extremists' like Alexander, and so to keep their diverse grouping together.[222]

Just as the Cyrilline strategy continued to emphasize the written *acta* as the locus of their conciliar authority and Nicene orthodoxy, so the Easterners continued to focus their attack upon these documents.[223] Indeed, it is in the Easterners' instructions to their envoys that the charge is made directly for the first time that Cyril's *Anathemas* had been 'inserted' (*ἐπεισαχθέντων*) by Cyril into the Nicene Creed.[224] This specific textual allegation is repeated in a subsequent letter to the envoys, which describes how 'those who have deposed

[218] *ACO* I.1.3, 33:22–3 (V.95): *εἰ ἕλοιντο οἱ προειρημένοι ὑπογράψαι μὲν τῆι καθαιρέσει Νεστορίου* […].

[219] It is also possible that subscription was to a composite document including subsequent Cyrilline sessions too.

[220] See the Eastern bishops' letter to the clergy of Antioch: *ACO* I.4, 57 (CC.106).

[221] *ACO* I.1.3, 38:1–4 (V.96): *Εἴ τι κατὰ τὴν ἐκτεθεῖσαν πίστιν ὑπὸ τῶν ἁγίων πατέρων τῶν ἐν Νικαίαι διαπράξεσθε μήτε ἐπεισαγομένου τινὸς τῆι πίστει τῶν ἁγίων πατέρων καὶ ἐκβαλλομένων τῶν αἱρετικῶν κεφαλαίων Κυρίλλου τοῦ Ἀλεξανδρέως, τούτωι συγκατατίθεμαι.*

[222] Whereas John of Antioch himself seems decidedly cool towards Nestorius (it is notable that John never speaks in his defence), it is clear that Alexander, Theodoret, and the other bishops of northern Syria still supported him—hence the delicacy of the Easterners' coalition; cf. A. M. Schor (2011), *Theodoret's People: Social Networks and Religious Conflict in Late Roman Syria* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press), 85–6.

[223] For another example of the Cyrilline appeal to the conciliar proceedings: *ACO* I.1.3, 65–6 (V.108). Irenaeus' earlier report suggested that the 22 June proceedings had still not fully convinced the imperial court of the Cyrilline council's legitimacy: *ACO* I.1.5, 135–6 (V.164).

[224] *ACO* I.1.3, 37:29–31 (V.96): *δήλου ἐκείνου τυγχάνοντος ὡς παντὶ τρόπωι τῶν κεφαλαίων τῶν αἱρετικῶν τῶν ὑπὸ Κυρίλλου τοῦ Ἀλεξανδρέως ἐπεισαχθέντων τῆι πίστει τῶν πατέρων τῶν κατὰ Νίκαιαν* […].

him [Nestorius] have, as you know, in their heretical minutes, attached the heretical Chapters to the Creed of the fathers, and thereby showed themselves to be heretics and strangers to the orthodox faith'.[225] The Easterners thus exploited the increasing focus on Cyril's written proceedings by purposely misreading them, craftily construing the inclusion of Cyril's *Third Letter* in the 22 June proceedings (which Cyril had cited to show he had correctly applied Rome's verdict) as an attempt not merely to ratify the *Anathemas* but to 'insert' them into the Creed itself. And since the proceedings concluded with episcopal signatures, to sign the proceedings (as Cyril's envoys were insisting upon) was to collude in this heretical addition to the Nicene Creed.[226]

Having established this 'reading' of Cyril's conciliar documentation, the Easterners could then reiterate their own fidelity to the unadulterated Nicene Creed by quoting the full text (just as Cyril himself had done in the 22 June proceedings).[227] Whereas they unwaveringly defended the Creed's sole sufficiency, Cyril was not 'satisfied with the teaching issued at Nicaea', and so sought to 'remove the everlasting landmarks placed by your fathers'.[228] The Easterners then provided their own list of signatures, implicitly contrasting their own subscription to the Creed alone with Cyril's supporters' subscription to the Creed and the *Anathemas* (via the 22 June proceedings). In addition to discrediting Cyril's conciliar *acta*, then, the Easterners could now circulate their own authoritative document, which included the complete Nicene Creed and a truly orthodox exposition of its teaching.[229] The Easterners had, in short, refined their critique of Cyril's idea of 'Nicaea' largely through mirroring Cyril's own text-based approach.[230]

While the Easterners may have enjoyed some moderate success in critiquing the Cyrilline idea of Nicaea at the colloquia, however, it brought them no decisive advantage. Theodoret lamented to his ally Alexander that 'our hearers [are] being swayed this way and that, now praising our position

[225] *ACO* I.1.7, 78:18–20 (CA.67.3): *οἱ γὰρ καθελόντες αὐτὸν ἐν αὐτοῖς τοῖς αἱρετικοῖς ὑπομνήμασι τὰ κεφάλαια τὰ αἱρετικά, ὡς ἴστε, συνῆψαν τῆι τῶν πατέρων πίστει, καὶ ταύτηι δείξαντες αὐτοὺς αἱρετικοὺς καὶ τῆς ὀρθοδόξου πίστεως ἀλλοτρίους* [...]; cf. *ACO* I.1.7, 74:11–13 (CA.63).

[226] *ACO* I.1.3, 39:20–3 (V.96); I.1.7, 79–80 (CA.69), cf. Halleux, 'Les douze chapitres', 446–54. Similarly, when the emperor reacted adversely to the doctrine of Acacius (a noted supporter of Cyril), the Easterners made sure to emphasize that he was prominent in the 22 June proceedings: *ACO* I.1.7, 77:23–4 (CA.66).

[227] *ACO* I.1.3, 39:1–11 (V.96). The fact that the Easterners now exactly followed Cyril's text of the Creed further shows the effect that inclusion within conciliar *acta* had on fixing one version of the Creed as alone legitimate.

[228] *ACO* I.1.3, 38:19–20, 23 (V.96): *πειθόμεθα γὰρ τῶι σοφῶι λέγοντι μὴ μέταιρε ὅρια αἰώνια, ἃ ἔθεντο οἱ πατέρες σου...ἀρκεσθῆναι δὲ τῆι ἐν Νικαίαι γενομένηι ἐκθέσει*, cf. *ACO* I.1.7, 74 (CA.63.4). The use of Prov. 22:28 in the context of Nicaea is derived from Cyril, and ultimately from Athanasius (e.g. Ath., *Ep. Afr.* 1.3).

[229] Cf. *ACO* I.1.3, 42 (V.97).

[230] The Easterners even composed their own florilegium of patristic citations exposing the errors of the *Anathemas*, just as Cyril had done against Nestorius: *ACO* I.1.7, 74:31–2 (CA.63.2).

and now being counter-persuaded'.[231] This is suggestive not only of the fickle nature of the imperial advisers but also of the failure of either of the rival claims to command widespread acceptance. It demonstrates, in other words, that after several months of strenuous efforts to articulate an authoritative conciliar 'reading' of Nicaea, the stalemate persisted.

A final reminder that Nicaea remained the decisive point of conflict is found in the Easterners' correspondence with Rufus of Thessalonica. Rufus is congratulated for having earlier written to Julian of Serdica, encouraging him to 'join in the struggle for the Creed issued by the blessed fathers convened at Nicaea, and not to allow a blemish to be inflicted on those few words that suffice both to demonstrate the truth and to refute falsehood'.[232] The Easterners go on to emphasize that the Creed lacks nothing, and that they will 'continue to contend in its defence' against those who would seek 'the confirmation and validation of the Chapters', until their opponents 'return to the faith of the holy fathers who assembled at Nicaea'.[233] Cyril is depicted as having betrayed Nicaea and given encouragement to its enemies—Arians everywhere boast that they have been finally vindicated since 'the teachers of the *homoousion* now hold the views of Arius'.[234] The Easterners also refer to several documents proving that Cyril's doctrine is in accord not with the orthodox fathers, but rather with the teaching of heretics.[235]

In short, then, there could be no reconciliation between the two parties by September 431 because there was no obvious way of bridging their opposing construals of 'Nicaea'. Both sides had embedded those construals within a set of authoritative conciliar activities and texts, and so made their divisions

[231] *ACO* I.1.7, 79:38–9 (CA.69.1): *καὶ μέχρι τῆς σήμερον ἡμέρας οὐδὲν ἀνύσαι ἠδυνήθημεν, τῇιδε κἀκεῖσε τῶν ἀκροατῶν περιφερομένων καὶ νῦν μὲν ἐπαινούντων τὰ ἡμέτερα, νῦν δὲ μεταπειθομένων.*

[232] *ACO* I.1.3, 40:6–8 (V.97): *συναγωνίσασθαι τῆι ἐκτεθείσηι πίστει ὑπὸ τῶν μακαρίων πατέρων τῶν ἐν Νικαίαι συναθροισθέντων καὶ μὴ συγχωρῆσαι μῶμον ἐκείνοις τοῖς βραχέσι ῥήμασιν ἐπεισαχθῆναι ἀρκοῦσι καὶ τὴν ἀλήθειαν δεῖξαι καὶ τὸ ψεῦδος ἐλέγξαι.*

[233] *ACO* I.1.3, 40:17–26 (V.97): *οὐδὲν γὰρ αὐτῆι ἐλλείπει, ὡς οἶδεν ἡ σὴ ἁγιότης, εἴς τε διδασκαλίαν τῶν εὐαγγελικῶν δογμάτων καὶ εἰς ἔλεγχον πάσης αἱρέσεως. ὑπὲρ ταύτης ἀγωνιζόμενοι διατελοῦμεν, πάντων ὁμοῦ τῶν κατὰ τὸν βίον καταφρονοῦντες τερπνῶν τε καὶ λυπηρῶν, ὥστε ἀνέπαφον διαφυλάξαι τὸν πατρῶιον τοῦτον κλῆρον· τούτου χάριν καὶ Κύριλλον καὶ Μέμνονα, τὸν μὲν ὡς αἱρεσιάρχην, τὸν δὲ ὡς συνεργὸν γεγενημένον καὶ ἐν ἅπασιν αὐτῶι συμμαχήσαντα ὥστε βεβαιωθῆναι καὶ στηριχθῆναι τὰ ἐπὶ διαφθορᾶι τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν ἐκτεθέντα κεφάλαια, καθαιρέσει ὑποβεβλήκαμεν καὶ τοὺς ὑπογράψαι καὶ συνθέσθαι τοῖς ἐναντίοις τῆς εὐσεβείας δόγμασι τετολμηκότας ἀκοινωνήτους πεποιήκαμεν, ἕως ἂν ἐκεῖνα μὲν ἀναθεματίσωσιν, εἰς δὲ τὴν πίστιν τῶν ἁγίων πατέρων τῶν ἐν Νικαίαι συνελθόντων ἐπανέλθωσιν.*

[234] *ACO* I.1.3, 41:25–7 (V.97): *ἴστω δέ σου ἡ θεοσέβεια ὡς οἱ τῶν Ἀρειανῶν διδάσκαλοι νῦν οὐδὲν ἕτερον ἐν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις αὐτῶν διδάσκουσιν ἢ ὡς οἱ τὸ ὁμοούσιον διδάσκοντες νῦν τὰ Ἀρείου φρονοῦσι καὶ ὅτι διὰ χρόνου μακροῦ τὸ ἀληθὲς ἀνεφάνη.* Cyril, it is argued, thus repeats the errors of Apollinarius, whose doctrine was condemned by Damasus—perhaps an attempt to undermine Cyril's claim that Rome was on his side.

[235] This includes a florilegium (*ACO* I.1.3, 41:3–5 [V.97]), and a book of Ambrose that teaches the opposite to the *Anathemas* (*ACO* I.1.3, 41:37–42:2)—Cyril had used excerpts from Ambrose in his 22 June proceedings.

even more intractable. Beginning with shared assumptions about the unique authority and sufficiency of Nicaea, Cyril and John had gradually constructed divergent yet mirroring accounts of how the faith of Nicaea had found its authentic contemporary expression in their own assemblies, where an authoritative credal reading strategy had been established, and the Nicene faith truly confirmed. However, neither side had managed conclusively to demonstrate the superiority of their own Nicene self-presentation, and, as month by month ticked by, the conceptual tools of orthodoxy appeared inadequate to arbitrate convincingly between those construals.

Despairing of a resolution, Theodosius issued his formal *sacra* of dissolution, with the crucial question of which episcopal gathering was the true oecumenical council of Ephesus still unanswered. The *sacra* simply maintained the pious fiction that there was only one council, without specifying which of the two was meant.[236] The ensuing months and years would witness the continued struggle over the true identity of the Nicene faith, and the authentic character of its Ephesine confirmation.

CONCLUSION

It has been the contention of this chapter that the peculiarly disruptive character of the Nestorian controversy, and the deeply contested nature of Ephesus 431, can be understood in terms of a fundamental conflict over the true idea of 'Nicaea'. The combination of Nicaea's unique authority and its practical inadequacy had created a profound problem for the articulation of orthodoxy by the early fifth century, which the dispute between Nestorius and Cyril had dramatically exposed and exacerbated. Nestorius had, from the outset, determined to fight on the basis of the authentic interpretation of the Nicene Creed, ensuring that the question of Nicaea would dominate the subsequent proceedings in Ephesus. The summer of 431 proved to be a fiasco and a failure not because there was disagreement about the need authoritatively to confirm Nicaea, but because the different parties could not agree on what that confirmation entailed. The idea of 'Nicaea' proved flexible enough to sustain the various (and mutually contradictory) construals of orthodoxy, while lacking the specific content to arbitrate conclusively between them. The Cyrilline and Eastern councils thus increasingly mirrored one another's Nicene strategies, contrasting their own defence of the Nicene faith with their opponents' scandalous attempts to pervert and betray it.

[236] *ACO* I.4, 68–9 (CC.118). Theodosius did confirm Nestorius' deposition, but not via Cyril's conciliar ruling.

However, as well as making the dispute more intractable, the transfer of the controversy to a conciliar context also opened up new discursive possibilities. The expression of Nicene orthodoxy via conciliar documentation allowed more advanced 'reading strategies' for interpreting Nicaea to be developed. In addition, fidelity to Nicaea could now be articulated not only doctrinally but also through the assertion of continuity between the conciliar activity of 325 and that of 431. In the event, Cyril showed himself more adept at exploiting these conciliar possibilities than the Easterners. Rather than contending on the basis of the wording of the Creed itself (where Nestorius' case had proved difficult to vanquish fully), Cyril used his written proceedings of 22 June to establish extra-credal authorities through which the Creed had to be read in order to be confessed correctly—and, significantly, these authorities included not only the works of dead 'fathers' but also his own *Second Letter*. This strategy relied on an appeal to a shared pneumatological inspiration as the guarantor of an underlying harmony of meaning between those texts, ensuring continuity between past and present expressions of the Nicene faith despite their apparent verbal or theological differences. Cyril then applied an equivalent hermeneutic at the conciliar level: just as the Nicene Creed must be approached through Cyril's writings, so the Nicene Council must be affirmed through recognizing Cyril's council as the locus of its authoritative confirmation.

These green shoots of creative theologizing demonstrate that the idea of Nicaea not only acted to problematize orthodoxy but could also serve as the means by which those problems were addressed—fidelity to the unchanging Nicene faith could be acknowledged, while subjecting it to a 'rejuvenating reception' which recognized that authentic continuity was found precisely in change. Ephesus did not represent, then, the *mere* reassertion of Nicaea's 'monopoly', as Sieben has argued, but rather involved a more complex dynamic—a 'double movement' in which the faith of Nicaea was solemnly reaffirmed as unique and unchanging while simultaneously being re-encountered in and through Cyril's writings and his council.[237] In this light, Nestorius' 'bare' reading of the credal text (including his insistence that the appellation 'Theotokos' was unwarranted simply because it was not present in the words of the Creed) could be understood as representing, by contrast, a kind of limiting or ossifying form of reception, which acted to impede Nicaea's ability to provoke new questions and open up new paths of theological enquiry. However, Cyril's construal of Nicaea remained a work in progress, and the success of the Easterners in depicting his strategy as the perversion of the Nicene faith by heretical addition demonstrates how vulnerable Cyril's

[237] Cf. Sieben, *Konzilsidee*, 232–44. Sieben's analysis also fails to appreciate the sheer flexibility of 'Nicaea' as a rhetorical device, so that the apparent consensus between the parties concerning its unique authority in fact disguised deeply opposed interpretations of how that authority was understood.

conciliar proceedings were to being deliberately misread. The Easterners, conversely, were more effective in critiquing Cyril's position than in commending their own, and they failed convincingly to articulate a positive account of why Nicaea should be understood according to an Antiochene Christological agenda.

The bishops dispersed from Ephesus unreconciled because the conflict over Nicaea remained unresolved. The following decade would witness a battle over the character of the reception of the authentic council of Ephesus—and, as we shall see, this inevitably involved a continued debate concerning what it meant, in the light of Ephesus, to be truly faithful to Nicaea.

4

The Idea of Nicaea in the Aftermath of Ephesus

The widespread acceptance of Ephesus I by the time of Ephesus II (449) and Chalcedon (451), and the almost ubiquitous acknowledgement of Cyril as its great 'father', should not obscure the ferociously contested nature of the council's reception in the years immediately following 431. Theodosius had sent the bishops home with very little resolved: two rival councils had met, each claiming for itself sole fidelity to the Nicene Creed, and each anathematizing the other for scandalously betraying that faith. The attempts to broker a settlement between the two parties had come to nothing, since these two opposing construals of 'Nicaea' could be neither convincingly demonstrated as superior to the other nor conclusively demonstrated as false. It was thus by no means clear that Cyril's idea of 'Nicaea', as expressed in the conciliar proceedings of his council, had won the day. The Easterners, after all, continued to assert that it was rather through their council, and not through Cyril's, that the true faith of Nicaea flowed. In this way, the controversy over the reception of the two rival councils of Ephesus that marked the ensuing months involved, at its heart, a continued battle over the true nature of 'Nicaea', and over the authentic contemporary expression of its unchanging faith.

EPHESUS AND THE PROBLEM OF RECEPTION

This first section will analyse the competing Nicene strategies of the Cyrilline and Eastern parties from late 431 until the Formula of Reunion of April 433. The debate centred on whether the faith of Nicaea could now be truly confessed only through the acceptance of Cyril's council (as the authoritative interpreter of the Nicene Creed and as the authoritative confirmation of the Nicene Council) or whether Nicaea could be properly affirmed without, and apart from, such a conciliar re-reception. As at Ephesus itself, the centrality of Nicaea not only inhibited a clear resolution to the controversy but also stimulated fresh and creative ways by which the Nicene faith could be

construed. We assess firstly, the Cyrilline strategies of Maximian, Celestine, Theodotus, and Cyril himself; secondly, the Easterners' gambit and Cyril's response; and thirdly, the Formula of Reunion.

Maximian's election to the see of Constantinople (25 October 431) gave a significant boost to Cyril's cause.[1] The emperor's invitation for Cyrilline bishops, but not Oriental bishops, to attend the consecration represented a decisive shift in imperial favour, and the warm exchange of letters between Maximian and Cyril soon afterwards clearly signalled which party the new bishop of Constantinople favoured.[2] Most importantly, Maximian, by having a nucleus of Cyrilline bishops around him, was able to continue the work of Cyril's council, purging Nestorian sympathizers under his jurisdiction, and enforcing the reception of Cyril's council as the only true Council of Ephesus.[3] Thus Maximian energetically circulated the decisions of the 'holy and oecumenical council at Ephesus', and did so by reissuing one of its earlier synodical letters.[4] The document was carefully chosen, since as well as listing those bishops considered deposed for associating themselves with John's council it threatened further depositions of the followers of Nestorius. In this way, Maximian could deploy the 'proceedings' of Ephesus to legitimize his own weeding-out of bishops sympathetic to Nestorius' cause.

To take one example, in a letter to the clergy and laity of Tenedos, Maximian enforced the deposition of their bishop Anastasius, basing his decision on the 'minuted proceedings at the holy and oecumenical council convened at Ephesus'.[5] Whilst Cyril's council had indeed included Anastasius in its list of deposed bishops, Maximian went further, claiming that the written proceedings included evidence that Anastasius had 'uttered terrible blasphemies against the holy Virgin Theotokos, and against the holy council formerly convened at Nicaea, and that at Ephesus'.[6] Since we have no other evidence

[1] Soc., *H.E.* VII.35; cf. Kidd, *History*, III, 252; R. Devreesse (1930), 'Après le Concile d'Ephèse', *É*chos d'Orient 30, 271–2.

[2] Cyril, *Ep.* 30 (*ACO* I.1.3, 71 [V.114]), *Ep.* 31 (*ACO* I.1.3, 72–4 [V.115]), *Ep.* 32 (*ACO* I.1.7, 137 [CA.90]). The Easterners regarded the see of Constantinople as vacated through Nestorius' resignation rather than through his (illegitimate) condemnation, so in this sense the problem that a new bishop presented to their own conciliar narrative was limited.

[3] This 'synod of Constantinople' was probably a form of the Constantinopolitan 'Home Synod', now being used to continue the work of Cyril's council—it included key supporters of Cyril such as Juvenal, Flavian, Theodotus, and Acacius, as well as the two papal legates; cf. the names attached at *ACO* I.1.3, 70–1 (V.113); *ACO* I.1.7, 137–8 (CA.92). For Maximian's deposition of 'Nestorian' bishops, see *ACO* I.1.7, 153–4 (V.116).

[4] *ACO* I.1.3, 70:20 (V.113): *τῆς ἁγίας καὶ οἰκουμενικῆς συνόδου τῆς ἐν Ἐφέσωι*. The earlier synodical letter is *ACO* I.1.3, 26–8 (V.91).

[5] *ACO* I.1.7, 138:8–9 (CA.92): *ὑπομνήματα ἡμῖν ἐπεδείχθη πεπραγμένα ἐν τῆι ἁγίαι καὶ οἰκουμενικῆι συνόδωι τῆι ἐν Ἐφέσωι συγκροτηθείσηι.*

[6] *ACO* I.1.7, 138:12–14 (CA.92): *βλασφημίαις χρήσασθαι κατά τε τῆς ἁγίας καὶ θεοτόκου παρθένου καὶ κατὰ τῆς ἁγίας συνόδου τῆς τε ἐν Νικαίαι πάλαι συγκροτηθείσης καὶ τῆς ἐν Ἐφέσωι διωρίσαντο.*

of this purported session, and Maximian admits to having been shown the minutes rather than possessing them himself, it is possible that this represents a post hoc retrojection of the business of Cyril's council, or perhaps the subsequent elevation of a private plaint to the status of a conciliar 'session'. In any case, it is clear that the official documentary record of the Cyrilline proceedings had become the primary locus of that council's identity and authority, and that this written record was now being exploited to construe Maximian's campaign of depositions as the legitimate implementation of Cyril's council's decisions. We note also here the continued attempt to associate (or even elide) the authority of the councils of Nicaea and Ephesus: to 'blaspheme' against one was now, by definition, to blaspheme against the other.

Just as revealing of Maximian's strategy for the reception of Ephesus is the set of petitions composed by bishops who wished to repent of their opposition to Cyril's council, and so return to the orthodox fold. The petitions all follow the same basic template: the legitimacy of John's council is rejected and its decisions renounced, whilst the oecumenical councils of Nicaea and Ephesus are affirmed as together proclaiming the one true faith, including the acceptance of 'Theotokos' and the anathematization of Nestorius' doctrine. Peter of Trajanopolis, for instance, wrote that he accepted that Cyril's 'holy and oecumenical' council was alone legitimate, and that 'the faith proclaimed by your holy council and the earlier one at Nicaea was pure and sound in orthodoxy'.[7] Julian of Serdica, similarly, wrote that he was 'completely convinced that the council had preserved pure and sound the profession of the orthodox faith that the multitude of holy fathers convened at Nicaea had expounded, and that your holinesses continue to proclaim'.[8] Julian also linked Cyril's council to the defence of the 'orthodox creed issued in the city of Nicaea by the 318 holy fathers'.[9] Both petitions contrasted this faith with the heresy of Nestorius, whose error lay in not having followed the faith of the holy fathers.[10]

Maximian's strategy was clear: it was not sufficient for penitent bishops merely to reject Nestorius and his doctrine, or to affirm 'Nicaea' simply and plainly. Rather, to be truly 'Nicene' now involved the acceptance of the Cyrilline council as Nicaea's sole conciliar successor and authoritative doctrinal

[7] *ACO* I.1.7, 139:16–18 (CA.93): *διδαχθεὶς ὑγιῆ καὶ καθαρὰν εἶναι τῆς ὀρθοδοξίας τὴν πίστιν ἣν ἡ ἁγία ὑμῶν σύνοδος καὶ ἡ πάλαι κατὰ τὴν Νικαέων γενομένη ἐκήρυξε*. Note the reference here to '*your* council'—the council of Ephesus was understood as still continuing through Maximian's synod.

[8] *ACO* I.1.7, 140:11–13 (CA.94): *ἐπληροφορήθην τε σώιζεσθαι παρ' αὐτῆι ὑγιῆ καὶ καθαρὰν τῆς ὀρθοδόξου πίστεως τὴν ὁμολογίαν ἣν ἥ τε κατὰ τὴν Νικαέων συγκροτηθεῖσα τῶν ἁγίων πατέρων ἐξέθετο πληθὺς καὶ ἡ ὑμῶν ἁγιότης διατελεῖ κηρύττουσα.*

[9] *ACO* I.1.7, 140:3–4 (CA.94): *συντίθεσθαι δὲ τῆι ἐν τῆι ἐν τῆι Νικαέων πόλει ἐκτεθείσηι ὑπὸ τῶν τριακοσίων δέκα καὶ ὀκτὼ ἁγίων πατέρων ὀρθοδόξωι πίστει.*

[10] *ACO* I.1.7, 139:28–9 (CA.93), 140:19 (CA.94).

interpreter, and the consequent repudiation of the Easterners' council and its own claims to express faithfully the Nicene faith. Cyril's council was composed of 'fathers', one in heart and mind with the fathers of Nicaea; the Easterners' anti-council was composed of heretics, one in heart and mind with Nestorius, Pelagius, Celestius, Bonosus, and all the rest.[11] Maximian's aim was thus to make the acceptance of Cyril's council a necessary part of the confession of the Nicene faith, and worked assiduously to circulate the council's written documents as the portable embodiment of its authority.

Celestine was also active in promoting the wider acceptance of Cyril's council, despatching three letters to this effect on 15 March 432. To Theodosius, Celestine expressed his hope that, with the consecration of Maximian, the (Nestorian) heresy would be fully rooted out and that the 'judgement of all the bishops' would be followed.[12] To the clergy and people of Constantinople, Celestine noted that no one was ignorant of what had transpired at Ephesus[13], and contrasted the Spirit-guided council embodying the great 'catholic' consensus of the church with Nestorius' single voice of heretical protest.[14] Celestine was evidently attempting here, in the context of some abiding local support for Nestorius' cause, to portray the Ephesine decision as cut-and-dried, and so close down the ongoing debate—tellingly, he emphasizes that with Nestorius deposed, there was no need to continue asking questions about God.[15] Finally, Celestine wrote to the 'holy synod of Ephesus' itself[16] (i.e. to Maximian's synod, again recognized as a continuation of Cyril's council), lauding that apostolic and universal assembly as composed of bishops who were at the same time *patres* (recognizing what was true from the beginning) and *iuvenes* (strong in fighting for the orthodox faith).[17] Celestine made a concerted effort, in short, to have Cyril's council recognized

[11] *ACO* I.1.7, 140:26–9 (CA.94).

[12] *ACO* I.2, 89:31–2 (CV.23.3): quem igitur universorum ejecit sententia sacerdotum in praedicatione sacrilega perdurantem [. . .].

[13] *ACO* I.2, 95:6–7 (CV.25.10): nec nos gestarum rerum putetis ignaros, quarum nobis ordinem sancti fratris nostri Cyrilli relatio patefecit.

[14] *ACO* I.2, 95:25–7 (CV.25.11): non fuit ante oculos tantorum vexatio sacerdotum, non congregatum ex omni paene mundi parte concilium; afuit ab his cum quibus se esse nesciret; *ACO* I.2, 95:34–5 (CV.25.12): tandem in sacerdotibus suis sanctis, sicut semper, spiritus vivens unus in omnibus statuit quod omnibus subveniret.

[15] *ACO* I.2, 92:1–4 (CV.25.2): si pateretur nativitas [quaestionem], quaestionem dixerim quam sibi unusquisque bene credens debet simpliciter aperire. quis enim in examen vocare audeat deum eumque discutere qualiter venerit subvenire?

[16] *ACO* I.2, 98:5–6 (CV.26.1): ad sanctam synodum ephesenam scripta.

[17] *ACO* I.2, 98:19–23 (CV.26.1): loquor ergo victoribus et qui in proelium solam contra hostem portaverint fidem, quae, et Iohanne dicente apostolo, vincit et mundum; vobis eiusdem proprie rescribo sermonibus, qui secundum divinam paginam ut patres cognovistis quod ab initio est, et ut iuvenes, dum fortes estis et verbum dei in vobis manet, vicistis malignum; cf. *ACO* I.2, 98:11–17 (CV.26.1), 99:16 (CV.26.3).

as alone legitimate, not least by conforming it to a series of familiar tropes, such as the 'catholic' judgement triumphing over the individual heretic.

Theodotus of Ancyra, one of Cyril's most fervent supporters, composed his *Expositio Symboli* shortly after the dissolution of the council.[18] The *Expositio* represents a continuation and development of the Cyrilline strategy of 22 June, written to show how the Nicene Creed was concordant with Cyril's doctrine and was opposed to that of Nestorius. Interestingly, the Creed itself only makes an appearance once Theodotus has given a thorough account of his own strongly Cyrilline Christology—this doctrine is then simply equated with the clear teaching of Nicaea.[19] Theodotus cites the Nicene Creed in full, precisely following the text used in the 22 June *acta*.[20] Whilst much of his subsequent material rehashes Cyril's own arguments, Theodotus also offers a new (albeit slightly eccentric) line of attack against Nestorius. He contends that the Creed's affirmation of *ὁμοούσιος* is primarily intended to denote that the Son is *one* (and not two).[21] This reading of *ὁμοούσιος* is then used to interpret the later statement regarding the 'one Lord Jesus Christ', which is thus interpreted as an affirmation of the unity of the Son rather than (as for Nestorius) an expression of a composite *πρόσωπον*.[22] In this way, Nestorius could be challenged on his own ground (the precise wording of the credal text), and so could be depicted as guilty of subtracting from the Creed by failing to give due regard to the word 'one' ('*one* Lord Jesus Christ'). By choosing to interrogate the Creed according to logic rather than faith, Theodotus argued, Nestorius forced it into error, and deviated from the fullness of the Nicene fathers' teaching.[23]

Another notable feature of the *Expositio* is that although Theodotus affirms, in principle, a high view of the unique authority of Nicaea,[24] it is evident that the Ephesine council also possesses a special authority for him. The work of the council is construed as involving the bishops ('fathers'[25]) gathering together to repeat the work of Nicaea, and condemning the new Arius, who like

[18] Theodotus had played a key role in Cyril's 22 June proceedings, reporting Nestorius' blasphemies (*ACO* I.1.2, 38 [V.53]), prominently affirming Cyril's *Second Letter* (*ACO* I.1.2, 14 [V.45.4]), and condemning Nestorius' *Second Letter* (*ACO* I.1.2, 33 [V.47.10]); he is also listed as present at the Cyrilline sessions of 10, 11, and 22 July. The *Expositio* must date from before Eutherius' *Antilogia* (433), which responds to some of Theodotus' arguments; internal evidence favours late 431 or early 432. On Theodotus' role at Ephesus, see now L. M. Frenkel (2015), *Theodotus of Ancyra's Homilies and the Council of Ephesus (431)* (Leuven: Peeters), 41–126.

[19] In this way, the Nicene fathers can be construed as condemning Nestorius' 'two Sons' doctrine in advance.

[20] Theodotus, *Exp. sym.* 8 (*PG* 77, 1325A–B).

[21] Theodotus, *Exp. sym.* 9 (*PG* 77, 1325D–1328B).

[22] Theodotus, *Exp. sym.* 11 (*PG* 77, 1329B–C).

[23] Theodotus, *Exp. sym.* 8 (*PG* 77, 1325C, 1324D): Nestorius forgot that the Creed says 'I believe' not 'I reason'.

[24] Theodotus, *Exp. sym.* 24 (*PG* 77, 1348D).

[25] e.g. Theodotus, *Exp. sym.* 9 (*PG* 77, 1325D).

his heretical forefather had sown seeds of discord in the Church.[26] Thus at both Nicaea and Ephesus the fathers met and expounded the rule of faith, and the Holy Spirit brought about the necessary consensus.[27] Moreover, Cyril is given special prominence as the great father who revived the faith of the 318 through reapplying it in a conciliar context.[28]. We see again, then, that the Cyrilline attempt to legitimize Ephesus through its authoritative confirmation and interpretation of the Nicene faith had the effect of including Ephesus within Nicaea's sacred aura.[29] Finally, Theodotus' citation of texts used in the 22 June session shows that the depiction of Nestorius' errors was increasingly being conditioned by the documentary strategy of Cyril's council, and is further evidence that the written proceedings were the primary locus of Cyril's council's authority.[30] In short, Theodotus' *Expositio* reveals the continued centrality of the debate over the proper interpretation of the Creed, as well as demonstrating how closely linked was the reception of Cyril's council to the acceptance of Cyril's particular reading of 'Nicaea'.

In addition to Maximian, Celestine, and Theodotus, Cyril was himself actively campaigning for the wider reception of his council. We can discern several elements in his strategy.

Firstly, Cyril sought to clear his own name, and to reassert his impeccable Nicene credentials, in the face of criticism from the Easterners and concern from within his own ranks.[31] Thus he defended the propriety of his actions (e.g. in the *Apologeticus ad Theodosium*), whilst emphatically denying that his doctrine followed that of Arius, Eunomius, and Apollinarius—rather, he adhered to the faith of the fathers of Nicaea in all his discourses.[32] This Nicene self-presentation was rolled out again in the *Scholia de Incarnatione*,[33] where Cyril once more explicitly rooted his position in the teaching of the Nicene Creed (though, again, he smuggled in 'Logos' as the subject of its incarnational statements). Cyril wrote that one should 'follow the right path by agreeing with what the most holy fathers discovered, those who were instructed by the illuminations of the Holy Spirit, and defined the symbol of

[26] Theodotus, *Exp. sym.* 1 (*PG* 77, 1313A–1316B), 9 (1325D).

[27] Theodotus, *Exp. sym.* 9 (*PG* 77, 1328A–B), 18 (1340B–C).

[28] Theodotus, *Exp. sym.* 10 (*PG* 77, 1328D–1329A).

[29] Sieben, *Konzilsidee*, 232–5, thus errs in seeing the *Expositio* as a straightforward affirmation of Nicaea's continuing monopoly in the construal of orthodoxy.

[30] e.g. Theodotus, *Exp. sym.* 10 (*PG* 77, 1328CD–1329A), 13 (1332B–D). The 22 June session is treated as the key event of Cyril's council—tellingly, Theodotus shows no knowledge of the 22 July session, even though referring to it would have helped him to demonstrate Cyril's commitment to Nicaea's unique sufficiency.

[31] Isidore of Pelusium, for instance, was concerned that Cyril had indulged a personal vendetta in condemning Nestorius at Ephesus (*Ep.* 310).

[32] e.g. Cyril, *Ep.* 31: *ACO* I.1.3, 72:27–9 (V.115); cf. a letter of Cyril from 432, edited in R. Y. Ebied and L. R. Wickham (1971), 'An Unknown Letter of Cyril of Alexandria in Syriac', *JTS* 22, 420–34, at 433:15–17.

[33] Likely composed in 432, partly to reassure Sixtus (the new Pope) of his orthodoxy.

faith for us, when they said that God the Logos, through whom all things were made . . . was himself incomprehensibly born from the substance of the Father, and came down for us and for our salvation, was made man'.[34]

Secondly, Cyril attempted to shore up his support by depicting his council as an idealized quasi-repetition of Nicaea. This helped to reassure his allies that he remained loyal to Nicaea, whilst also furthering Maximian's strategy of contending that the Nicene faith could not be faithfully confessed (nor the Nicene council be truly acknowledged) other than via the reception of the his Ephesine council. Cyril's *Festal Letter* of April 432 thus rejoiced that:

> The holy multitude of the reverent priests of God in every place did not remain silent, but gathered together all in one chorus, and taking up the shield of faith (as it is written, 'having shod their feed with the equipment of the gospel of peace', of Christ that is), and stretching forth 'the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God', plundered the ranks of the unholy, crying out in the words of the Psalm, 'The Lord's enemies have lied to him, and their time will be forever'.[35]

Here Cyril not only construes his council's activity according to Nicene tropes (the catholicity and piety of the assembled priests, their consensus, the inspiration of the Spirit, etc.) but also goes on to depict the event as a kind of scriptural mimesis, in which 'the accursed Amelek armed himself once again against the true Israel . . . but our Lord Jesus Christ, having gathered the chosen ones from all Israel, has met him in battle and conquered'.[36] In this way, Cyril's council could be seamlessly integrated into an orthodox narrative of the past, in which the followers of Christ once again crushed the heretics.

Cyril similarly cast his council in a 'Nicene' light in writing to old Acacius of Beroea in late 431 or early 432. He maintained that 'the holy council in the city of Ephesus did nothing out of place, or anything beyond what was fitting, or anything beyond proper reason'[37], but rather 'confirmed the statements

[34] *ACO* I.5, 212:12–18 (CP.57.35): atque rectum ita iter ingredi, sectantes ea quae patres sanctissimi examinarunt, qui sancti spiritus inluminationibus eruditi, sanxere nobis symbolum fidei, ipsum dicentes quod ex patris substantia inaestimabiliter natum est, deum verbum, per quod omnia facta sunt quae in caelo et quae in terra, propter nos homines et nostrae salutis causa descendisse, carnem factum, hominem factum, passum, ascendisse in caelum, venturum per tempora iudicare vivos et mortuos; cf. *ACO* I.5, 193:22–5 (CP.57.13).

[35] Cyril, *Hom. pasch.* 20.1 (*PG* 77, 844:6–16): *Οὐ γὰρ ἠρέμησεν ἡ ἁγία πληθὺς τῶν ἁπανταχόσε σεπτῶν ὀρέων τοῦ Θεοῦ· ἀλλ' εἰς ἕνα πάντες συναγηγερμένοι χορὸν, καὶ ἀναλαβόντες τὸν θυρεὸν τῆς πίστεως, καθὰ γέγραπται, ὑποδησάμενοί τε τοὺς πόδας ἐν ἑτοιμασίᾳ τοῦ Εὐαγγελίου τῆς εἰρήνης, τουτέστι Χριστοῦ, ἀνατείναντές τε τὴν μάχαιραν τοῦ πνεύματος, ὅ ἐστι ῥῆμα Θεοῦ, τὸ τῶν ἀνοσίων κατεληΐζοντο στίφος, τὸ ἐν Ψαλμοῖς ἐκεῖνο βοῶντες· Οἱ ἐχθροὶ Κυρίου ἐψεύσαντο αὐτῷ· καὶ ἔσται ὁ καιρὸς αὐτῶν εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα.*

[36] Cyril, *Hom. pasch.* 20.2 (*PG* 77, 844:41–7): *Ὡπλίσθη καὶ νῦν κατὰ τοῦ κατὰ τὴν ἀλήθειαν Ἰσραὴλ ὁ ἐπάρατος Ἀμαλὴκ, ὁ τῇ τοῦ Σωτῆρος εὐκλείᾳ μαχόμενος, καὶ τοῦ κατ' αὐτὸν μυστηρίου τὴν δύναμιν ἐπιχειρῶν ἀνατρέπειν. Ἀλλ' ἐκ παντὸς Ἰσραὴλ τοὺς ἐξειλεγμένους συνενεγκὼν ὁ Κύριος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς, ἀντετάξατο καὶ νενίκηκεν.*

[37] Cyril, *Ep.* 92.10 (*ACO* I.1.7, 142:4–6 [CA.95.10]): *δὲ τῶν ἀτόπων οὐδὲν ἢ γοῦν ἔξω τοῦ εἰκότος ἢ τῶν πέρα λόγου τοῦ πρέποντος ἡ ἁγία πέπραχε σύνοδος κατὰ τὴν Ἐφεσίων μητρόπολιν.*

decreed about the faith by our holy fathers in the city of Nicaea, and unanimously crowned that great and holy council as setting forth the precisely worded definition of the blameless faith'.[38] We note again here the paradoxical nature of Cyril's council: it merely 'confirmed' Nicaea, but this 'confirmation' was itself an act of profound conciliar authority, 'crowning' the orthodox faith. Such a construal allowed Cyril both to present his council as entirely conservative and also to demand its recognition as part of an authentic confession of the faith of Nicaea.[39]

Thirdly, Cyril engaged in a concerted effort to circulate his written conciliar proceedings, as an embodiment of his council's authority. For instance, he concluded his letter to Acacius by referring him to the Ephesine *acta*.[40] Cyril evidently expected Acacius to possess a copy of these conciliar documents, or at least to be acquainted with them. To 'receive' the council was thus to receive (and perhaps add one's signature to) the conciliar *acta*, and thus to receive the particular idea of Nicaea that those *acta* contained. Moreover, by including his own letters within the proceedings, this energetic documentary circulation also helped to promote Cyril's own status as an orthodox 'father', whose writings faithfully expounded the Nicene faith. The reception of Cyril's council was in this sense also bound together with the recognition of Cyril's writings—although, as we shall see, the question of precisely *which* writings authentically expressed Cyril's doctrine would be increasingly problematic.

Having examined the various Cyrilline strategies for promoting a particular idea of 'Nicaea' via the reception of Cyril's council, we now turn to the Easterners' tactics in the aftermath of Ephesus. Like Cyril and his supporters, the Easterners sought to promote their own Ephesine assembly as the true oecumenical council. On their way back home from Ephesus, they had held a series of synods at Caesarea, Tarsus, and Antioch, at which they condemned Cyril as a heretic, anathematized the bishops who associated with him, and circulated their own conciliar decisions as the authoritative rulings of the authentic council of Ephesus.[41] The Easterners also continued their attack on Cyril's conciliar documents—indeed, Cyril complained that they were trying to 'suppress' the written proceedings and were claiming that 'some

To refute accusations that he had obsessively pursued Nestorius, Cyril emphasized that it was Nestorius who had first desired a council (*ACO* I.1.7, 141:4–8, 41–2).

[38] Cyril, *Ep.* 92.11 (*ACO* I.1.7, 142:9–11 [CA.95.11]): *κρατύνοντες μὲν τὰ τοῖς ἁγίοις πατράσιν ὁρισθέντα περὶ αὐτῆς ἐν τῆι Νικαέων πόλει καὶ τὴν ἁγίαν ἐκείνην καὶ μεγάλην σύνοδον παμψηφὶ στεφανοῦντες ὡς ἀκριβῆ καὶ τετορνευμένον τὸν τῆς ἀμωμήτου πίστεως ὅρον ἐξενεγκοῦσαν*; cf. *ACO* I.1.7, 142:4 (the work of the Holy Spirit at Ephesus).

[39] Cyril thus denied he had in any way innovated upon the faith of the Nicene fathers (*ACO* I.1.7, 142:11–13).

[40] Cyril, *Ep.* 92.10 (*ACO* I.1.7, 142:6 [CA.95.10]).

[41] *ACO* I.4, 104 (CC.155), 163–4 (CC.224), 167:29–32 (CC.229), 194:11–14 (CC.263), 221:27–8 (CC.291); cf. Soc., *H.E.* VII.34; McGuckin, *Cyril*, 109; Bevan, *New Judas*, 208–9.

things were not properly said and done in the holy synod'.[42] Though smaller in number than Cyril's council, the Easterners claimed that they embodied the truly catholic position, since it was Cyril's *Anathemas* that had 'disturbed the whole world'.[43]

However, with Theodosius keen to effect reconciliation between the two sides,[44] John of Antioch was presented with a crucial opportunity to shape the settlement in his party's favour. The Easterners' resultant proposal for peace, put to Cyril in April 432, ran as follows:

> We abide by the faith of the holy fathers who assembled at Nicaea, which has the evangelical and apostolic teaching and does not need addition. The most holy and blessed Athanasius, the Bishop of Alexandria and confessor, in the letter to the most blessed and most God-loving Epictetus, the Bishop of Corinth, makes its thought clear. We accordingly abide by it as having the precise interpretation of the faith mentioned before. We reject all the doctrines introduced recently either through letters or through chapters as confusing the common people, since we are content with the ancient legislation of the fathers, and obey the one who said: 'Remove not the ancient landmarks which your fathers set up [Prov. 22:28]'.[45]

This 'Proposition'[46] of the Easterners was ingenious for several reasons.

Firstly, it allowed the Easterners to continue to assert their own particular idea of 'Nicaea': they stood on the faith of Nicaea alone, and rejected any additions to it as both unnecessary, and as contrary to Proverbs 22:28. This precisely reiterated their position at Ephesus, even down to the same scriptural citation.[47] Cyril was quick to recognize this, remarking that 'such were their conditions before, in the city of Ephesus'.[48] The Proposition's seemingly anodyne adherence to Nicaea thus subtly reaffirmed the Easterners' anti-Cyril polemic.

[42] Cyril, *Ep.* 48.2 (*ACO* I.1.4, 31:33–4 [V.129.2]): *προσεποιοῦντο γὰρ καὶ μέμψεις προσάγειν ὡς οὐκ ὀρθῶς τινων εἰρημένων καὶ πεπραγμένων ἐν τῆι ἁγίαι συνόδωι*; cf. *Ep.* 33.4 (*ACO* I.1.7, 148:1–3 [CA.107.4]).

[43] *ACO* I.4, 167:25–6 (CC.229.2): capitula Cyrillus exposuit plena universis haeresibus, propter quae universus perturbatus est orbis.

[44] *ACO* I.1.4, 3–5 (V.120).

[45] *ACO* I.1.7, 146:24–32 (V.105): *Ἐμμένομεν τῆι πίστει τῶν ἐν Νικαίαι συνεληλυθότων ἁγίων πατέρων τὴν εὐαγγελικὴν καὶ ἀποστολικὴν διδασκαλίαν ἐχούσηι καὶ προσθήκης οὐ δεομένηι. σαφῆ δὲ αὐτῆς ποιεῖ τὴν ἔννοιαν καὶ ὁ ἁγιώτατος καὶ μακαριώτατος Ἀθανάσιος ὁ ἐπίσκοπος τῆς Ἀλεξανδρέων καὶ ὁμολογητὴς ἐν τῆι ἐπιστολῆι τῆι πρὸς τὸν μακαριώτατον καὶ θεοφιλέστατον Ἐπίκτητον τὸν ἐπίσκοπον Κορίνθου. ἐμμένομεν τοίνυν καὶ αὐτῆι ὡς ἀκριβῆ ἑρμηνείαν ἐχούσηι τῆς προειρημένης πίστεως. τὰ δὲ πρόσφατον ἐπεισαχθέντα δόγματα ἢ δι᾽ ἐπιστολῶν ἢ διὰ κεφαλαίων ὡς τὸ κοινὸν διαταράξαντα ἐκβάλλομεν, ἀρκούμενοι τῆι παλαιᾶι τῶν πατέρων νομοθεσίαι καὶ πειθόμενοι τῶι εἰπόντι μὴ μέταιρε ὅρια αἰώνια ἃ ἔθεντο οἱ πατέρες σου.*

[46] There were subsidiary 'propositions' that have been lost: cf. *ACO* I.4, 99–100 (CC.147), 114:2–4 (CC.166).

[47] Cf. *ACO* I.1.3, 36–9 (V.96).

[48] Cyril, *Ep.* 48.1 (*ACO* I.1.4, 31:19–20 [V.129.1]): *οἶδε δὲ ἡ σὴ ὁσιότης ὅτι τοιαῦται πάλαι αὐτῶν αἱ προτάσεις ἦσαν κατὰ τὴν Ἐφεσίων πόλιν.*

Secondly, although the Easterners' call for the rejection of 'all the doctrines introduced recently either through letters or through chapters' primarily referred to Cyril's *Anathemas* (the focus of their ire), the breadth of the phrasing meant that it could be read as encompassing all of Cyril's writings. Again, this was precisely how Cyril interpreted it, as threatening to 'undo everything written by me in letters, volumes, and documents'.[49] The Easterners realized, in other words, that the authority of Cyril's writings was bound up with their official endorsement by his council—if Cyril abandoned the former, he fatally undermined the latter.

Thirdly, the key document of reconciliation, other than the Nicene Creed itself, was to be Athanasius' *Ad Epictetum*. This was very hard for Cyril to oppose, since he had himself appealed to the letter in the proceedings of 22 June,[50] and it was, moreover, a work by the great Nicene 'father' of his own see. In addition, the Easterners' proposal meant that peace would be established on *this* text, and not on the basis of either Cyril's own writings or his conciliar documents. Indeed, in claiming that it was *Ad Epictetum* that made the thought of Nicaea clear, the Proposition dislodged Cyril's *Second Letter* from its position as the unique interpretive authority for 'reading' Nicaea. Perhaps the Easterners saw their campaign against Cyril's council precisely as a retreading of Athanasius' campaign against the Arians—for in *Ad Epictetum* Athanasius explained that 'since they [the Arians] were pretending that they too had conciliar authorities, it was announced universally that no council should be recognized in the catholic church except that which was held at Nicaea'.[51]

The Easterners' proposed settlement, in short, committed them to no significant theological concessions, did not require the recognition of Cyril's council, and allowed them to continue to assert their own idea of 'Nicaea'.[52] Moreover, it profoundly undermined Cyril's articulation of 'Nicaea', in construing his doctrine as an unwarranted addition to the Nicene faith and in displacing his own writings (and the conciliar documentation in which they were contained) by a letter of his beloved 'father' Athanasius.

Cyril's reaction—a firm 'no'!—reveals his own continuing efforts to defend his council and his writings as authoritative interpreters of Nicaea. Cyril rightly discerned that the Easterners' Proposition threatened to undermine his entire endeavour ('if what was written against Nestorius is not correct, or

[49] Cyril, *Ep.* 40.3 (*ACO* I.1.4, 21:22–5 [V.128.3]): *ἤθελον γὰρ ἀργῆσαι μὲν σύμπαντα τὰ παρ᾽ ἐμοῦ γραφέντα ἔν τε ἐπιστολαῖς καὶ τόμοις καὶ βιβλιδίοις, μόνηι δὲ ἐκείνηι συνθέσθαι τῆι ἐν Νικαίαι παρὰ τῶν ἁγίων ἡμῶν πατέρων ὁρισθείσηι πίστει*, cf. Severus, *Contra Gramm.* III.1.

[50] *ACO* I.1.2, 40 (V.54.5–6), cf. I.1.7, 90–1 (CA.75.7–8).

[51] Ath., *Ep. Epict.* 1 (*PG* 26, 1051A): *ὡς ἀφ᾽ ἑνὸς πνεύματος κινούμενοι ἀνεθεμάτισαν ἔγραψάν τε πανταχοῦ, διὰ τὸ τοὺς τοιούτους ἐπινοεῖν ἑαυτοῖς ὀνόματα συνόδων, μηδεμίαν ἐν τῇ καθολικῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ σύνοδον ὀνομάζεσθαι, εἰ μὴ μόνην τὴν ἐν Νικαίᾳ γενομένην* [. . .].

[52] As noted above, even Nestorius' removal from Constantinople could be accepted by most Easterners, since they could claim that he had voluntarily relinquished his see.

what was written against his perverse teaching is not correct, then he was deposed from office without cause'[53]), but he struggled to demonstrate *why* the apparently innocuous basis of the Easterners' proposal (i.e. the unique sufficiency of Nicaea, as interpreted by *Ad Epictetum*) was unacceptable, especially in light of his own avowed commitment to Nicaea.

In his response to Acacius of Beroea, Cyril emphasized that the Nicene Creed was indeed sufficient: 'that Creed is sufficient for all knowledge of good, and since there is nothing lacking in it, I certainly will recite it and will agree with it, even if it does not seem to some others to mean or say this'.[54] As in his *Third Letter*, however, Cyril regarded *merely* confessing the Creed as inadequate. Moreover, he claimed that his own writings simply repudiated Nestorius' innovations: 'after they have read the documents, most men indeed have derived profit and honoured in their right mind what was said by us against him'.[55] The Easterners' error thus lay in their failure to understand correctly the nature of Cyril's writings, especially his conciliar documents: 'what hindered them from approving what had been legitimately done, after inspecting the records of the council's acts?'[56] For it had been 'the only intention of the holy and oecumenical council which gathered in the capital city of Ephesus that it affirm the profession of faith, seeing that all so confess and believe and teach without anything being added and with nothing being taken from it'.[57] Cyril's council, in other words, had defended the very principle of Nicaea's sufficiency that the Easterners now insisted upon, and, indeed, had 'passed a decree against Nestorius as one who was not persuaded of the profession of the faith, but rather as one who removed or obliterated it'.[58]

Cyril then made a further intriguing reference to the work of his council: 'therefore there was action taken in Ephesus about this individual petition, while the council confirmed the faith expounded by our holy fathers who gathered at Nicaea in the time of crisis, and I have sent this, so that your holiness might well know. Since it is right and irreprehensible, the very reading

[53] Cyril, *Ep*. 33.4 (*ACO* I.1.7, 148:6–7 [CA.107.4]): *οὐκοῦν εἰ μὴ ὀρθῶς ἔχει τὰ κατὰ Νεστορίου ἤτοι τῶν ἀνοσίων αὐτοῦ δογμάτων γεγραμμένα, μάτην καθήιρηται καὶ τάχα που φρονεῖ μὲν ἐκεῖνος ὀρθῶς.*

[54] Cyril, *Ep*. 33.3 (*ACO* I.1.7, 147:36–8 [CA.107.3]): *ἐγὼ δὲ ὅτι μὲν τὸ σεπτὸν ἐκεῖνο τῆς πίστεως σύμβολον ἀπόχρη πρὸς πᾶσαν εἴδησιν ἀγαθήν, ἐνδεῖ δὲ αὐτῶι παντελῶς οὐδέν, φαίην ἂν καὶ συνθήσομαι κἂν εἰ μὴ ἑτέροις δοκεῖ τισι τοῦτο φρονεῖν ἢ λέγειν.*

[55] Cyril, *Ep*. 33.4 (*ACO* I.1.7, 147:41–148:1 [CA.107.4]): *καὶ τοῖς τόμοις ἐντυχόντες ὠφέληνται πολλοὶ καὶ ὀρθῆι συνέσει τετιμήκασι τὰ κατʼ ἐκείνου παρʼ ἡμῶν εἰρημένα*, cf. 33.10 (149:32–3).

[56] Cyril, *Ep*. 33.5 (*ACO* I.1.7, 148:15–16 [CA.107.5]): *τί τὸ κωλῦον ἦν ἐντυχόντας τοῖς πεπραγμένοις ὑπομνήμασι πληροφορηθῆναι μὲν ὅτι γεγόνασιν ἐνθέσμως.*

[57] Cyril, *Ep*. 33.7 (*ACO* I.1.7, 148:40–3 [CA.107.7]): *κἀγὼ πρὸς τοῦτο ἐρῶ ὅτι σκοπὸς γέγονεν εἷς τῆι ἁγίαι καὶ οἰκουμενικῆι συνόδωι τῆι συναχθείσηι κατὰ τὴν Ἐφεσίων μητρόπολιν τοῦ στῆσαι τὸ σύμβολον, ὥστε καὶ πάντας ὁμολογεῖν τε καὶ πιστεύειν οὕτω καὶ διδάσκειν, μήτε προστεθέντος τινὸς μήτε μὴν ὑφηιρημένου.*

[58] Cyril, *Ep*. 33.7 (*ACO* I.1.7, 148:44–149:1 [CA.107.7]): *διὰ γάρτοι τοῦτο καὶ Νεστορίου κατεψηφίσατο ὡς μὴ τηρήσαντος αὐτό, παρακεκινηκότος δὲ μᾶλλον καὶ παρασημήναντος* [. . .].

of it will clearly explain it'.[59] This is the very first reference to the 22 July session in any correspondence (Cyrilline or Eastern). Evidently Acacius did not have a copy of these proceedings, despite (as noted above) already likely possessing the *acta* of Cyril's council. Considering the deafening silence regarding this session in the autumn of 431, is it possible, therefore, that Cyril's circulation (or even composition) of the 22 July proceedings was only triggered in mid 432, by the Easterners' Proposition? After all, the Easterners' suggestion of a settlement based on the sufficiency of Nicaea threatened to obliterate Cyril's work at Ephesus, and the 22 July document was a very convenient way of demonstrating that his council was not opposed to Nicaea's sufficiency, and that, moreover, it was only by affirming it that Nicaea's sufficiency could truly be safeguarded. Cyril's description of having 'added also the testimonies of our holy and blessed fathers' to the document certainly suggests the semi-artificial character of the proceedings.[60] We shall discover in the next section further evidence that in the years after Ephesus, Cyril carefully tailored the selection of conciliar documents that he circulated, and so himself helped to generate a variety of distinct Ephesine 'receptions'.

Cyril's response to the Easterners' Proposition, then, was to defend his own fidelity to Nicaea, and to insist that his council had uniquely safeguarded, not threatened, the Nicene faith. He refused, moreover, to abandon his own writings, since they contained nothing that 'disagrees either with sacred Scripture, or indeed with the definition of faith which was expounded by the holy fathers, I mean those who were gathered in Nicaea in their own time'.[61] To repudiate those writings would in effect be to 'approve those which are the writings of Nestorius'.[62] Indeed, it was only by accepting Cyril's works, as enshrined in his conciliar documentation, that the heresy of Nestorius could be finally vanquished. In short, the status of Cyril's writings, his council, and his own self-presentation as a 'father' were all intimately connected—the true confession of Nicaea was now inseparable from the recognition of the council

[59] Cyril, *Ep.* 33.7 (*ACO* I.1.7, 149:3–6 [CA.107.7]): *πέπρακται τοίνυν ἐν τῆι Ἐφέσωι περὶ τούτου ἰδικὸν ὑπόμνημα, βεβαιούσης τῆς συνόδου τὴν ἐκτεθεῖσαν πίστιν παρὰ τῶν ἁγίων ἡμῶν πατέρων τῶν ἐν Νικαίαι συνειλεγμένων κατὰ καιρούς, καὶ πέπομφα τοῦτο πρὸς εὐμάθειαν τῆι σῆι ὁσιότητι· ὅτι γὰρ ὀρθῶς καὶ ἀνεπιπλήκτως ἔχει, διδάξει σαφῶς ἡ ἀνάγνωσις.*

[60] Cyril, *Ep.* 33.8 (*ACO* I.1.7, 149:6–8 [CA.107.8]): *παρεθήκαμεν δὲ καὶ τῶν ἁγίων καὶ μακαρίων πατέρων χρήσεις, ἵν' εἰδεῖεν οἱ ἐντυγχάνοντες τίνα τρόπον ἐκεῖνοι νενοήκασι τὸ τῆς πίστεως σύμβολον, οἳ καὶ ἡμῶν αὐτῶν γεγόνασι μυσταγωγοί.* Cyril's comment fits with the textual evidence for the 22 July session, where the patristic citations are largely copied from the 22 June session, and inserted next to Charisius' petition (cf. the odd grammatical transition at: *ACO* I.1.7, 95–6 [CA.76]). Cyril similarly appears to acknowledge editorial addition to the 22 July proceedings at *Ep.* 55.6 (*ACO* I.1.4, 50).

[61] Cyril, *Ep.* 33.10 (*ACO* I.1.7, 150:1–3 [CA.107.10]): *ἀπᾶιδον οὐδὲν ὅλως ἐστὶν ἢ ταῖς ἁγίαις καὶ θεοπνεύστοις γραφαῖς ἢ γοῦν τῶι ἐκτεθέντι τῆς πίστεως ὅρωι παρὰ τῶν ἁγίων πατέρων, τῶν ἐν Νικαίαι φημὶ συνεδρευσάντων κατὰ καιρούς.*

[62] Cyril, *Ep.* 34 (*ACO* I.4, 140:31–2 [CC.196]): approbabimus ea quae sunt Nestorii; cf. *Ep.* 37 (*ACO* I.1.7, 154 [CA.117]).

which confirmed that faith, and from the writings which that council had acknowledged as orthodox. The Easterners' proposal had threatened to rend these elements asunder, and was thus unacceptable in Cyril's sight. The exchange between the two parties thus further illustrated that the authentic meaning of 'Nicaea' remained central, contested, and unresolved.

The subsequent tortuous progress of negotiations between Cyril and the Easterners throughout late 432 and early 433 need not unduly concern us here.[63] We focus rather on the terms of the eventual settlement, the so-called Formula of Reunion, since it helps to elucidate the state of affairs with regard to the idea of 'Nicaea' by April 433.

The text of the Formula was first sent by John to Cyril.[64] As we have noted above, this was in large part an adapted version of the Easterners' earlier confession of faith at Ephesus, with the aggressive denunciations of Cyril tactfully omitted.[65] In this way, the Easterners could claim consistency in their commitment to a particular idea of 'Nicaea', and that it was Cyril who had moved to accept their construal of orthodoxy, rather than vice versa. Moreover, by adding to their earlier text an explicit acknowledgement that scriptural terms could be legitimately attributed *either* to Christ's manhood *or* to his Godhead, the Easterners sought to extract from Cyril a significant retreat from the position he had laid out in his fourth *Anathema*.[66] The Formula's affirmation of 'Theotokos' was barely a concession at all for the Easterners, who had, after all, stated back in Ephesus that they could accept the term.

With regard to the battle for Nicaea itself, the proposed Formula offered Cyril similarly few crumbs of comfort. John's text to Cyril simply stated that 'we will add nothing at all to the faith published by the holy fathers at Nicaea . . . [which] suffices both for the full knowledge of godliness and for the rejection of all heretical false doctrine'.[67] By asserting the sufficiency of Nicaea without requiring the acceptance of Cyril's council or his writings, the Formula was an implicit assault upon Cyril's idea of Nicaea. Even the Easterners' recognition of the deposition of Nestorius did not require the acknowledgement of Cyril's conciliar session of 22 June (or its interpretation of Nicaea), but only of the subsequent imperial ruling.[68]

[63] The most detailed and cogent account can be found in: Bevan, *New Judas*, 210–26.

[64] *ACO* I.1.4, 8:19–9:9 (V.123.2–3), cf. Kinzig, *Formulae*, II, 72–4.

[65] Cf. *ACO* I.1.7, 69–70 (CA.48); Fairbairn, *Grace and Christology*, 212f.

[66] *ACO* I.1.4, 9:5–8 (V.123.3); and retained in Cyril's *Laetentur Caeli: ACO* I.1.4, 17:17–20 (V.127.5).

[67] *ACO* I.1.4, 8:22–5 (V.123.2): *οὐδὲν τὸ σύνολον προστιθέντες τῆι τῶν ἁγίων πατέρων τῶν ἐν Νικαίαι ἐκτεθείσηι πίστει. ὡς γὰρ ἔφθημεν εἰρηκότες, πρὸς πᾶσαν ἐξαρκεῖ καὶ εὐσεβείας γνῶσιν καὶ πάσης αἱρετικῆς κακοδοξίας ἀποκήρυξιν* (cf. Kinzig, *Formulae*, II, 73). This emphasis was retained when quoted in Cyril's *Laetentur Caeli*: *ACO* I.1.4, 17:4–6 (V.127.4).

[68] *ACO* I.1.4, 9:9–16 (V.123.4).

Cyril replied in his Ep. 39 (Laetentur Caeli), incorporating the Formula into the letter as the official basis for his reconciliation with John. In doing so, Cyril was able to make some subtle doctrinal tweaks to John's text—for instance, changing the affirmation of Christ as 'perfect God and perfect man' to the more single-subject oriented 'perfect in Godhead and perfect in manhood'. Moreover, at no point did Cyril explicitly retract his *Third Letter* and *Anathemas* (although his opponents had no qualms about claiming that he had). Even so, perhaps fearing that his subscription to the Formula could be interpreted as a recognition of the defeat of his idea of 'Nicaea', Cyril again robustly defended his own doctrine as in accord with the fathers, and emphasized that he had never permitted any change to be made to the Nicene Creed: 'nor do we allow, either by us or by others, either a word to be changed in it or a single syllable to be omitted'.[69] Cyril evidently still needed to combat the accusation that he had added his *Anathemas* to the Creed at the 22 June session, as the Easterners had repeatedly insisted.

Cyril further sought to regain some tactical ground in two ways. Firstly, by attaching the uncorrupted text of Athanasius' *Ad Epictetum* ('a transcript taken from ancient and correct copies which we have here'[70]), Cyril presented himself as the true guardian of orthodoxy by being the guarantor of the authentic text of the key document (as he had earlier done with the Creed).[71] Secondly, Cyril in quick succession asserted the Spirit's inspiration of the fathers of Nicaea ('for it was not they who spoke, but the very Spirit of God the Father'[72]), lamented that heretics twist the words spoken by the Holy Spirit, and then complained that those heretics similarly 'wrest my words to what they please'.[73] This appears to be a subtle attempt to include his own writings within the pneumatologically secured deposit of faith.

[69] Cyril, *Ep.* 39.10 (*ACO* I.1.4, 19:20–4 [V.127.10]): *κατ᾽ οὐδένα δὲ τρόπον σαλεύεσθαι παρά τινων ἀνεχόμεθα τὴν ὁρισθεῖσαν πίστιν ἤτοι τὸ τῆς πίστεως σύμβολον παρὰ τῶν ἁγίων ἡμῶν πατέρων τῶν ἐν Νικαίαι συνελθόντων κατὰ καιροὺς οὔτε μὴν ἐπιτρέπομεν ἑαυτοῖς ἢ ἑτέροις ἢ λέξιν ἀμεῖψαι τῶν ἐγκειμένων ἐκεῖσε ἢ μίαν γοῦν παραβῆναι συλλαβήν, μεμνημένοι τοῦ λέγοντος μὴ μέταιρε ὅρια αἰώνια, ἃ ἔθεντο οἱ πατέρες σου.*

[70] Cyril, *Ep.* 39.11 (*ACO* I.1.4, 20:12–13 [V.127.11]): *ἐξ ἀντιγράφων ἀρχαίων τῶν παρ᾽ ἡμῖν καὶ ἀπλανῶς ἐχόντων ἀπεστείλαμεν τὰ ἴσα τῆι σῆι ὁσιότητι.*

[71] Cf. T. Graumann (2003), 'Kirchliche Identität und bischöfliche Selbstinszenierung: Der Rückgriff auf "Athanasius" bei der Überwindung des nachephesinischen Schismas und in Kyrills Propaganda', in B. Aland, J. Hahn, and C. Ronning (eds), *Literarische Konstituierung von Identifikationsfiguren in der Antike* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck), 195–213. Cyril likely exaggerated the level of textual corruption: cf. Schwartz, *ACO* I.5.2, xv.

[72] Cyril, *Ep.* 39.10 (*ACO* I.1.4, 19:24–5 [V.127.10]): *οὐ γὰρ ἦσαν αὐτοὶ οἱ λαλοῦντες, ἀλλὰ τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ πατρός* [. . .].

[73] Cyril, *Ep.* 39.10 (*ACO* I.1.4, 20:3–7 [V.127.10]): *ὅταν δὲ τινὲς τῶν τὰ ὀρθὰ διαστρέφειν εἰωθότων τὰς ἐμὰς παρατρέπωσι φωνὰς εἰς τὸ αὐτοῖς δοκοῦν, μὴ θαυμαζέτω τοῦτο ἡ σὴ ὁσιότης, εἰδυῖα ὅτι καὶ οἱ ἀπὸ πάσης αἱρέσεως ἐκ τῆς θεοπνεύστου γραφῆς τὰς τῆς ἑαυτῶν πλάνης συλλέγουσιν ἀφορμάς, τὰ διὰ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος ὀρθῶς εἰρημένα ταῖς ἑαυτῶν κακονοίαις παραφθείροντες* [. . .].

The settlement of April 433, in short, certainly broke some important theological ground. The Antiochene emphasis on the dual consubstantiality of the Son, and on the propriety of attributing scriptural sayings about Christ either to the Godhead or to the manhood, had been given a prominence that would, two decades later, come profoundly to shape the terms of the Chalcedonian Definition. And yet the Formula failed satisfactorily to resolve questions of conciliar legitimacy, and of the authentic expression of the Nicene faith, that the events of Ephesus had brought to the surface. Indeed, the Easterners remained free to reject Cyril's council, and the idea of 'Nicaea' that it enshrined.[74] Cyril's emphasis on the necessity of confessing Nicaea through Ephesus had not been officially accepted, and the Easterners' crafty reiteration of their earlier rhetoric regarding Nicaea represented something of a 'secret victory' for their own construal of orthodoxy.[75]

Nonetheless, the primary contribution of the Formula was to postpone, rather than resolve, the problem of 'Nicaea' that had dominated the conflict of the previous five years. The document demonstrated that whilst an appeal to Nicaea continued to be at the heart of both parties' construal of orthodoxy, there remained no clear means to arbitrate convincingly between their respective claims. Indeed, the fact that Cyril and the Easterners attempted to reconcile via the reiteration of the uncontroversial shibboleth of Nicaea's sufficiency, and via the affirmation of Athanasius' *Ad Epictetum* as Nicaea's interpreter, is suggestive rather of a retreat into the comforting simplicity of mid-fourth century Nicene orthodoxy—a forlorn recognition that the only place of agreement between the two sides, amidst the complexities of the present, was through recourse to a shared past.

CYRILLINE TRAJECTORIES

It has been traditionally assumed that the Peace of 433 marked the formal reception of the Cyrilline council of 431, and the recognition of that council's role in authoritatively confirming the Nicene faith: 'from that time forth one could speak in ecclesiastical phraseology of the holy oecumenical council of Ephesus'.[76] The truth, as we have seen above, was rather more complex. The

[74] Cf. the lack of formal concessions to Cyril's Nicene construal in: Cyril, *Ep.* 38 (*ACO* I.1.4, 7:21–8:1 [V.123]). Furthermore, the fact that Paul of Emesa, within days of anathematizing Nestorius and being restored into communion with Cyril, was able to preach two sermons in Alexandria espousing an explicitly Antiochene Christology demonstrates how little Cyril had achieved from the settlement doctrinally. *ACO* I.1.4, 9–11 (CV.124), 11–14 (CV.125).

[75] I use Bevan's helpful term: Bevan, *New Judas*, 236.

[76] F. Loofs (1914), *Nestorius and his Place in the History of Christian Doctrine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 56. As an example of this assumption in recent literature see, for

Formula of Reunion's apparently clear and solemn reaffirmation of Nicaea pointed not to a newly established consensus between the different parties, but rather to the continued absence of one. Indeed, despite its flashes of theological light, the Formula failed adequately to address the profound problematization of the idea of 'Nicaea' that had been wrought by the polemical exchanges of the previous five years, instead merely reasserting the Nicene Creed's unique authority and sole sufficiency. Yet it was precisely the nature of Nicaea's sufficiency, and the manner of its correct interpretation, that had divided the rival councils of 431, and that had remained a key point of friction during the subsequent attempts at reconciliation. To hope that the Formula's naive appeal to Nicaea could provide a satisfactory resolution to the controversy was thus a lamentable delusion: there could be no return to Eden after Ephesus.

The foregoing argument therefore requires a reconceptualization of the 430s. These years were, in fact, marked neither by broad agreement regarding the Ephesine confirmation of Nicaea nor by the acceptance of a moderate Cyrilline construal of the Nicene faith, but rather involved an ongoing battle to establish the true idea of 'Nicaea'. This did not result, however, in a drearily monotonous reassertion of old polemical strategies. For (contrary to the hopes of the Formula) no party could entirely ignore the conciliar controversy of Ephesus 431, and every major idea of 'Nicaea' was thus now refracted through particular interpretations of those events. We witness, then, not the straightforward reception of Ephesus I, but rather a number of distinct and divergent receptions. Some bishops continued wholly to resist the recognition of the Cyrilline council in shaping the Nicene faith, while others accepted the council, but deliberately 'read' it (via its official documentation) in a manner considerably at odds with Cyril's own intentions. Crucially, the subsequent crisis concerning the idea of 'Nicaea' that erupted in the Church between 448 and 451 can thus be characterized as a conflict between these mutually incompatible trajectories of reception of Ephesus I that began to emerge in the years after 431.

In this section, then, we examine a number of Cyrilline trajectories of reception after 433.

We begin by analysing Cyril's own struggle to impose his idea of 'Nicaea' via the Formula, and its effect on the reception of Ephesus. Cyril's opponents wasted no time in exploiting the fact of his subscription, portraying him as having abandoned his former stance, as having repudiated his *Anathemas*, and even as having accepted the legitimacy of Nestorius' teaching.[77] The

instance, A. Riches (2016), *Ecce Homo: On the Divine Unity of Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans), 26.

[77] Cyril, *Ep.* 40.6 (*ACO* I.1.4, 23:15–17 [V.128.6]): *εἶτα περιέλκοντες αὐτὴν πρὸς τὸ αὐτοῖς ἡδύ τε καὶ φίλον καὶ νοοῦντες οὐκ ὀρθῶς, οὐκ ἀπαιδόντως γενέσθαι φασὶ ταῖς Νεστορίου κενοφωνίαις,*

doctrinal content of the Formula—especially its simplistic affirmation of the Nicene Creed—was thus woefully insufficient as a means of condemning the Christology of the vast majority of Nestorius' sympathizers. The ease with which such men could show their own theology to be within the Formula's bounds (and so concordant with Nicaea) thus represented a significant setback to Cyril's attempt (via the 22 June proceedings) to establish Nestorius' reading of the Creed as invalid.

The Formula was also exploited to undermine Cyril's Nicene credentials: 'they are even asserting that we have just accepted a *πίστεως ἔκθεσιν*, or *σύμβολον καινὸν*, as if we had somehow lost respect for the old and venerable one'.[78] Just as Cyril had been accused of adding his *Anathemas* to the Creed, so now it was claimed that, by subscribing to the Formula, he had sought to displace the Creed entirely. The essentially synonymous use of *πίστεως ἔκθεσιν* and *σύμβολον* reminds us of the continuing problems caused by the fluid terminology employed for statements of faith. Clear conceptual distinctions (of the kind invoked to justify the 'Definition' of 451) had not yet developed, so to affirm *any* formal doctrinal statement was potentially to expose oneself to the charge of adding to, or abandoning, the Nicene Creed—even such a statement as the Formula that explicitly acknowledged Nicaea's sufficiency!

In this context, Cyril reassured his ally Acacius of Melitene that 'enough for us are the inspired Scriptures, the sober vigilance of the holy fathers, and the Creed carved out to meet absolutely every detail of orthodoxy'—again setting the sufficiency of the Creed within a wider patristic context.[79] Moreover, Cyril defended his fidelity to Nicaea by appealing to the record of his council: 'the holy oecumenical synod assembled at Ephesus of course foresaw that it was essential that no other statement of faith should be introduced into God's churches in addition to the existing one, which the thrice-blessed fathers defined in words inspired by the Holy Spirit'.[80] This is surely a reference to the 22 July session.[81] As in his earlier letter to Acacius of Beroea, then, the

cf. *Ep.* 30:23–31:1 (V.128.22). John of Antioch construed the Formula as involving Cyril's formal retraction of the *Anathemas*: *ACO* I.4, 112–13 (CC.165); as did Theodoret: *ACO* I.4, 101:25–9 (CC.149); *ACO* I.4, 104:14–16 (CC.150); Theod., *Ep.* 112 (*SC* 111, 54:2–4); and as did Ibas: *ACO* II.1.3, 32–4. Acacius of Melitene noted with concern that Nestorius' allies condemned 'two sons' language, whilst gleefully persisting in their heresy: *ACO* I.4, 118–19 (CC.172).

[78] Cyril, *Ep.* 40.6 (*ACO* I.1.4, 23:18–19 [V.128.6]): *μανθάνω δὲ ὅτι κἀκεῖνό φασιν ὅτι πίστεως ἔκθεσιν ἤτοι σύμβολον καινὸν ἀρτίως κατεδεξάμεθα, τάχα που τὸ ἀρχαῖον ἐκεῖνο καὶ σεπτὸν ἀτιμάσαντες.*

[79] Cyril, *Ep.* 40.6 (*ACO* I.1.4, 23:22–3 [V.128.6]): *ἀπόχρη γὰρ ἡμῖν ἡ θεόπνευστος γραφὴ καὶ τῶν ἁγίων πατέρων ἡ νῆψις καὶ τὸ πρὸς πᾶν ὁτιοῦν τῶν ἐχόντων ὀρθῶς ἐκτετορνευμένον τῆς πίστεως σύμβολον.*

[80] Cyril, *Ep.* 40.7 (*ACO* I.1.4, 24:1–4 [V.128.7]): *ἡ μὲν γὰρ ἁγία καὶ οἰκουμενικὴ σύνοδος ἡ κατὰ τὴν Ἐφεσίων πόλιν συνειλεγμένη προενόησεν ἀναγκαίως τοῦ μὴ δεῖν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις τοῦ θεοῦ πίστεως ἔκθεσιν ἑτέραν εἰσκρίνεσθαι παρά γε τὴν οὖσαν, ἣν οἱ τρισμακάριοι πατέρες ἐν ἁγίωι πνεύματι λαλοῦντες ὡρίσαντο.*

[81] Cf. Schwartz's comment at *ACO* I.1.4, xviii.

22 July session was becoming Cyril's preferred means of demonstrating to his concerned friends that, far from having betrayed the orthodox cause, his fidelity to Nicaea alone remained undiminished. The refashioning of 'Canon 7' from a specific ruling concerning the reception of repentant heretics to a general prohibition on any other creeds originates not with Eutyches and Dioscorus in the late 440s, but is in fact rooted in Cyril's own defensive use of the 22 July proceedings in the years after Ephesus.

With regard to his own writings, Cyril needed to strike a delicate balance, promoting them as a necessary and authoritative hermeneutical key to the Creed, without thereby making them an unwarranted 'addition'. He thus claimed that just as Peter commanded all Christians to be ready to make their defence of the faith, so 'the man who chooses to do this [i.e. Cyril] makes no innovation, neither is he regarded as the proponent of a new statement of faith: no, he is clarifying his belief about Christ in response to questioners'.[82] We glimpse here again Cyril's subtle articulation of his council's activity as a kind of 'rejuvenating reception' of Nicaea: in response to fresh questions regarding the faith, a genuine doctrinal achievement was made (the Nicene faith was 'clarified') but without thereby adding to the Creed (the Nicene faith remained unchanged). Discursive tools were here being fashioned that Chalcedon would come to deploy with even more ambitious intent.

In short, Cyril's idea of 'Nicaea' had not convincingly triumphed by 433, and his opponents were able to exploit his acceptance of the Formula to undermine his Nicene self-presentation. This impression can be corroborated by the evidence of a slew of letters that Cyril wrote soon after the Peace, in which he sought desperately to correct false or malicious interpretations of the Formula. In letters to Rufus of Thessalonica, and to his supporters in Constantinople, he complained of those who interpreted the Formula as concordant with Nestorius' doctrine.[83] To Dynatus he wrote that the Formula was seen as a retraction of his writings, and to Valerian that it was understood as a formal affirmation of Nestorius' teaching.[84] To the priest Eusebius, Cyril emphasized that he had not changed his mind, but rather remained committed to the decisions of Ephesus.[85] To the tribune Aristolaus, Cyril attempted to link subscription of the Formula to the acceptance of his council, remarking 'let them not say that they do not know the synod which met at Ephesus!'[86]

[82] Cyril, *Ep.* 40.7 (*ACO* I.1.4, 24:8–11 [V.128.7]): *καίτοι γέγραφεν ὁ θεσπέσιος μαθητής· ἕτοιμοι ἀεὶ πρὸς ἀπολογίαν παντὶ τῶι αἰτοῦντι ὑμᾶς λόγον περὶ τῆς ἐν ὑμῖν ἐλπίδος· ὁ δὲ τοῦτο δρᾶν ἡιρημένος καινουργεῖ μὲν οὐδέν, ἀλλ' οὐδὲ πίστεως ἔκθεσιν ὁρᾶται καινοτομῶν, ἐναργῆ δὲ μᾶλλον καθίστησιν τοῖς ἐρομένοις αὐτὸν ἣν ἂν ἔχοι πίστιν περὶ Χριστοῦ.*

[83] Cyril, *Ep.* 42 (*Gr. 1431*, 32); *Ep.* 44 (*ACO* I.1.4, 35–7 [V.132]).

[84] Cyril, *Ep.* 48 (*ACO* I.1.4, 31–2 [V.129]); *Ep.* 50 (*ACO* I.1.3, 90–101 [V.119]).

[85] Cyril, *Ep.* 54 (*ACO* I.1.7, 164–5 [V.130]).

[86] Cyril, *Ep.* 60 (*ACO* I.4, 230:38–41 [CC.300]): videant impendens sibi a deo periculum et prolatum terminum ab universali concilio quod in Epheso congregatum est. definivit enim ut qui

One particularly significant piece of evidence is Cyril's letter to Maximian of late 433. Cyril again expressed concern at the way the Formula was being read: 'some men have repeatedly said that all of us, and those through the East, agree only on the profession expounded by our holy and glorious fathers at Nicaea, disregarding all of the things which we have written against the polluted teachings of Nestorius'.[87] By focusing on the Formula's simple affirmation of the Creed (as interpreted only by *Ad Epictetum*), Cyril's opponents had thus been able to claim that the Formula committed them *only* to Nicaea, and not to the authoritative exposition of Nicaea via Cyril's council and writings. They could thus safely retain, almost entirely unmodified, their own particular interpretations of the Nicene faith. The claim simply to be following Nicaea could, in this way, be an effective means to evade the more developed hermeneutic that Cyril had tried to establish. He robustly maintained that:

> We do not join in praising the profession of the true faith by disregarding our own writings; we have written them, moving according to the *σκοπός* of the holy fathers who have decreed for us the profession of faith. We know that we walk truly upright and are not off the direct path, since we make their words the canon of precision in everything whatsoever.[88]

Again, we see Cyril walking the tightrope between *merely* affirming Nicaea, and adding to it. Cyril claims here that his unimpeachable fidelity to Nicaea involves following the Spirit-filled writings of the fathers as they interpret the Creed—and, implicitly, that this orthodox path of interpretation includes his own writings too. To remove his writings from their role in rightly interpreting the Creed was, in this sense, to lose hold of true orthodoxy.[89] Indeed, Cyril again claimed that the acceptance of the Formula required the acceptance of his council, which 'confirmed the profession of the faith again and decreed the deposition of Nestorius, since he was misinterpreting it and twisting around to his own purpose the confession of the faith which had been truly and deliberately set forth by our holy fathers'.[90]

ea quae sunt Nestorii, locuntur aut sapient, sive episcopi fuerint sive clerici, a sacerdotio repellantur, ne decant quod eam que in Epheso congregata est, synodum nesciant [...]. This passage also alludes to the 22 July session.

[87] Cyril, *Ep.* 93 (*ACO* I.1.7, 162:25–8 [CA.126]): *ἐπειδὴ δὲ τεθρυλήκασι τινὲς ὡς δόξαν ἅπασιν ἡμῖν τε καὶ τοῖς κατὰ τὴν Ἀνατολὴν μόνωι συνθέσθαι τῶι συμβόλωι τῶι ἐκτεθέντι παρὰ τῶν ἁγίων καὶ ἀοιδίμων ἡμῶν πατέρων ἐν τῆι Νικαέων, ἀθετουμένων πάντων ὧν γεγράφαμεν κατὰ τῶν μιαρῶν Νεστορίου δογμάτων.*

[88] Cyril, *Ep.* 93 (*ACO* I.1.7, 162:29–33 [CA.126]): *οὐ γὰρ ἀθετήσαντες τὰ ἑαυτῶν συναινοῦμεν τῶι συμβόλωι τῆς ὀρθῆς πίστεως, ἀλλὰ κἀκεῖνα γεγράφαμεν κατὰ σκοπὸν τρέχοντες τῶν ἁγίων πατέρων, οἳ καὶ τὸ τῆς πίστεως ἡμῖν τεθεσμοθετήκασι σύμβολον. ἴσμεν δὲ ὅτι ὀρθοποδοῦμεν ἀληθῶς καὶ οὐκ ἔξω τῆς εὐθείας ἐσμὲν ὁδοῦ, κανόνα τῆς εἰς πᾶν ὁτιοῦν ἀκριβείας τοὺς ἐκείνων ποιούμενοι λόγους.*

[89] Cyril, *Ep.* 93 (*ACO* I.1.7, 162:38–40 [CA.126]).

[90] Cyril, *Ep.* 93 (*ACO* I.1.7, 163:3–7 [CA.126]): *καὶ γὰρ καὶ ἡ ἁγία σύνοδος ἡ ἐν τῆι Ἐφέσωι συναχθεῖσα πάλιν τὸ σύμβολον τῆς πίστεως ἐβεβαίωσε καὶ Νεστορίου κατεψηφίσατο τὴν*

It was, in short, Cyril's opponents' damaging interpretations of the Formula that led him to construe the Peace of 433 as a straightforward endorsement and ratification of the authority of his council. It is only in the aftermath of the Peace (and its failure to straightforwardly endorse his idea of 'Nicaea') that Cyril insisted upon the recognition of his council as a necessary corollary of accepting the Formula. Ironically, of course, by trying to construe the Formula as an expression of his council's achievements, Cyril actually made it easier for the Easterners to thereby read his council in the light of the Formula, rather than vice versa.

Since the Formula had acted as much to undermine as to secure the widespread acceptance of Cyril's idea of Nicaea, his strategy after the Peace was focused on the circulation of his own writings, and especially his conciliar documentation, as the most authoritative expression of the Nicene faith. By controlling the nature of the council's reception, Cyril hoped to wrest the interpretive initiative back from his opponents. We have already noted that Cyril had begun to circulate the 22 July proceedings during 432–3. He also sent the *Adversus Orientales*, the *Apologeticus contra Theodoretum*, and the *Contra Nestorium* to Rufus, the *Contra Nestorium* and *Scholia* to Rabbula, a selection of his letters to Dynatus, and unspecified writings to Acacius, Rabbula, and Firmus.[91] Most significantly, in seeking to influence the imperial court, he instructed Eulogius (his agent in Constantinople) to circulate a series of key writings:

> Take the most venerable Chamberlain the two books sent by me: the one against Nestorius' blasphemies, and the other containing the synodical acts against Nestorius and his sympathizers and refutations produced by me in reply to those who wrote against the Chapters—two are bishops, Andrew and Theodoret. The same book has very good and helpful summary expositions of the dispensation in Christ at the end. Present him likewise with five of the parchment letters: blessed Pope Athanasius' to Epictetus, ours to John, our two to Nestorius—the short and the long—and ours to Acacius.[92]

καθαίρεσιν, ὡς παρερμηνεύοντος αὐτοῦ καὶ εἰς τὸν ἴδιον περιέλκοντος σκοπὸν τὴν ὀρθῶς καὶ ἐξητασμένως ἐκτεθεῖσαν τῆς πίστεως ὁμολογίαν παρὰ τῶν ἁγίων ἡμῶν πατέρων.

[91] Cyril, *Epp.* 43 (*Gr. 1431*, 19–20), 74 (*ACO* IV.1.87), 48 (*ACO* I.1.4, 31–2 [V.93]), 57 (*Gr. 1431*, 21).

[92] Cyril, *Ep.* 44 (*ACO* I.1.4, 37:5–14 [V.132]): *προσάγαγε δὲ τῶι μεγαλοπρεπεστάτωι πραιποσίτωι τὰ ἀποσταλέντα παρ' ἐμοῦ δύο βιβλία, ἓν μὲν κατὰ τῶν Νεστορίου δυσφημιῶν, ἕτερον δὲ ἔχον τὰ ἐν τῆι συνόδωι πεπραγμένα κατὰ Νεστορίου καὶ τῶν τὰ αὐτοῦ φρονούντων καὶ ἀντιρρήσεις παρ' ἐμοῦ γενομένας πρὸς τοὺς γράψαντας κατὰ τῶν κεφαλαίων· δύο δέ εἰσιν ἐπίσκοποι, Ἀνδρέας καὶ Θεοδώρητος. ἔχει δὲ ἐπὶ τέλει τὸ αὐτὸ βιβλίον καὶ συντόμους ἐκθέσεις περὶ τῆς κατὰ Χριστὸν οἰκονομίας, σφόδρα καλὰς καὶ ὠφελῆσαι δυναμένας. προσάγαγε δὲ ὁμοίως αὐτῶι ἐκ τῶν ἐχουσῶν δέρμα ἐπιστολὰς πέντε, μίαν μὲν τοῦ μακαρίου πάπα Ἀθανασίου πρὸς Ἐπίκτητον καὶ ἄλλην πρὸς Ἰωάννην παρ' ἡμῶν καὶ πρὸς Νεστόριον δύο, μίαν τὴν μικρὰν καὶ μίαν τὴν μεγάλην, καὶ τὴν πρὸς Ἀκάκιον.*

The identification of most of these documents is straightforward: the 'one against Nestorius' blasphemies' refers to the *Contra Nestorium*, and the 'refutations' are the *Adversus Orientales* and the *Apologeticus contra Theodoretum*. The 'summary expositions' is likely the *Scholia*.[93] The documentary context of Cyril's conciliar proceedings has again been carefully tailored—by binding up the synodical *acta* with more substantial doctrinal works, Cyril could provide greater depth to his council's theological stance while defending its reputation from attacks on the *Anathemas*. Cyril's choice of letters is also notable: the Formula itself ('ours to John'), with its official interpreter (*Ad Epictetum*) but also a Cyrilline gloss ('ours to Acacius'). Moreover, since it is unlikely that Cyril would have sent his 'short' and 'long' letters to Nestorius (i.e. the *Second* and *Third Letters*[94]) if they were already included within the *acta* he had despatched, this suggests that the conciliar session he provided was that of 22 July (which lacked the letters), and not 22 June (which cited them in full[95]).

Two other strands of evidence further suggest Cyril's shift towards circulating the 22 July proceedings during the 430s. Firstly, Cyril sent a version of his *acta* to the monk Eutyches.[96] It will be argued in the next chapter that the later reports of Eutyches' activities in Constantinople in 448 reveal that he was passing around an unusual version of the Ephesine *acta*, and, when combined with his repeated appeals to 'Canon 7' and with his followers Carosus and Dorotheus' preference for the 22 July session at Chalcedon[97], the evidence strongly suggests that Eutyches possessed the 22 July proceedings. Secondly, Cyril's *Ep.* 55 of 438 (see the next section) focused on the 22 July session as the key achievement of the council.

The key point, then, is that Cyril himself sought to reshape the character of his Ephesine council, in response to the powerful Antiochene critiques of the 22 June session during the summer of 431 and his ongoing battles with the Easterners over the correct expression of the Nicene faith from 432, by shifting his documentary circulation to the 22 July session. This latter session represented Cyril's attempt to provide a more coherent account of his idea of 'Nicaea', and, through its 'Canon 7', gave a more effective rebuttal to the persistent charge that Cyril had added to Nicaea. Moreover, the 22 July session also allowed Cyril to argue that his council had condemned not only Nestorius

[93] Wickham, *Letters*, 67.

[94] The 'short' letter is unlikely to be the *First Letter*, for it featured little in proceedings: *ACO* I.1.2, 8:3–5 (V.34).

[95] It is unclear whether the 22 June documentation quoted the letters at the appropriate point in the proceedings or placed them in a preface: the latter is suggested in the proceedings themselves (*ACO* I.1.2, 13:16 [V.44.3]), but this may be a subsequent scribal emendation, while the former is implied by the version read out at the Home Synod of 448 (see Chapter 5) and by the copy used by Nestorius (*Liber*, Bedjan, 211).

[96] *ACO* II.1.1, 91:12 (I.157), cf. *ACO* I.4, 222–4.

[97] *ACO* II.1.1, 313:40–314.2 (IV.88).

but *all* who shared his doctrine. He could thus claim that the Formula, in affirming the decisions of his council, thereby ruled out 'Nestorian' teaching *in toto*. It was Cyril, and not Dioscorus more than a decade later, who fatefully modified the reception of Ephesus I by orientating it towards the 22 July session; it was Cyril, and not Dioscorus, who reinterpreted 'Canon 7' as prohibiting *any* deviation from the Creed, rather than simply regulating the reception of repentant heretics. Dioscorus neither perverted Cyril's legacy nor pioneered an eccentric interpretation of Ephesus, but rather faithfully followed his 'father'.

Crucially, this shift towards the 22 July session created a distinct Cyrilline 'trajectory of reception' of Ephesus that was largely limited to Cyril's allies. The Easterners' remarkable silence regarding the 22 July session continued throughout the 430s and 440s. As we shall see, the attacks of Eutherius, Irenaeus, and Nestorius on Cyril's council during these years showed no awareness of the session, and uniformly regarded the 22 June proceedings as the defining conciliar event. At the Constantinopolitan Home Synod of 448, the conciliar record jumped straight from the 22 June proceedings to the Formula of Reunion.[98] At Ephesus II, Dioscorus' appeal to the 22 July session was viewed by some as a surprising and unexpected use of the Ephesine tradition.[99] At Chalcedon, the well-informed Eusebius claimed never to have heard of 'Canon 7'.[100]

The period following the Peace witnesses, in short, a significant divergence between different 'receptions' of Ephesus I, facilitated by different documentary records of the council. This also ensured divergent construals of the idea of 'Nicaea' that Ephesus I was understood as having authoritatively confirmed—a process encouraged by the fact that the full text of the Nicene Creed was present in both the 22 June and 22 July proceedings, and was increasingly quoted not abstractly, but via its textual inclusion in official conciliar *acta*.

We now trace some of those Cyrilline receptions of Ephesus during the 430s, and examine the ideas of 'Nicaea' that they embodied.

Firstly, then, we examine the imperial idea of 'Nicaea' after Ephesus. The emperor's *sacra* of dissolution in 431 had studiously maintained the fiction that only one council had gathered in Ephesus, and so avoided labelling either of the two competing assemblies as illegitimate.[101] Even Theodosius' acceptance of Nestorius' deposition had not been on the authority of the Cyrilline session of 22 June. The emperor had thus not formally specified the manner in which he considered the Nicene faith to have been confirmed at Ephesus, nor had he affirmed any of the various Cyrilline or Eastern conciliar pronouncements on Nicaea as authoritative. Theodosius' attempts to facilitate the

[98] *ACO* II.1.1, 107:20 (I.245). [99] *ACO* II.1.1, 180:17–9 (I.858).
[100] *ACO* II.1.1, 91:15–6 (I.158); see the further analysis in Chapter 7.
[101] *ACO* I.4, 68–9 (CC.118), cf. *ACO* I.1.7, 142:28–30 (CA.97).

reconciliation of John and Cyril during 432 similarly neither imposed a particular idea of Nicaea nor required the recognition of Cyril's council.[102]

It was only with the apparent establishment of a lasting peace through the exile of Nestorius and his most intransigent allies that Theodosius began to re-engage with the question of the character of the Nicene faith and the nature of its Ephesine confirmation. Thus, in a series of imperial decrees of 435/6, Nestorius and Irenaeus were exiled, Nestorius' supporters were outlawed, and his writings were consigned to the flames.[103] The intention was not only to reiterate the condemnation of Nestorius, but also to incorporate him into the pantheon of heretics. Indeed, in terming the followers of Nestorius 'Simonians', Theodosius drew an explicit link with Constantine's condemnation of Arianism.[104] And yet still no precise definition of Nestorius' heresy was given—the terms of the Peace were merely reasserted, providing ample room for those Antiochenes prepared to abandon Nestorius to maintain their Christological teaching.[105] Intriguingly, the constitution did specify the books of Nestorius that were to be prohibited, namely those 'concerning the pure religion of orthodox persons and against the dogmas of the holy synod of the bishops in Ephesus'.[106] The council of Ephesus is thus not mentioned formally to ratify its authoritative confirmation of the Nicene faith, but instead crops up almost incidentally, because Nestorius had written against it.

The constitution suggests, then, that by 435/6 there was imperial recognition (albeit implicit) of the Cyrilline council as the legitimate council of Ephesus, and a limited acknowledgement of its role in the condemnation of Nestorius. It remained, however, a 'minimal' and underdeveloped reception of Ephesus, with only a fleeting and vague nod to the council's 'dogmas'. The imperial construal of orthodoxy had not yet adopted the council's own self-presentation as the authoritative confirmation of Nicaea. This is in stark contrast to Theodosius' far more full-blooded references to Ephesus I during the late 440s—and such careful restraint may have been a deliberate attempt to preserve the fragile peace of 433. Rather than endorse Cyril's council fully and on its own terms (which would have alienated as many as it would have delighted), Theodosius perhaps preferred to maintain the broad Nicene consensus of the Formula of Reunion. The deeper questions that the summer of 431 had raised about the nature of the Nicene faith, and the role of conciliar authority in confirming it, were thus ignored in the quest for a continued peace.

[102] *ACO* I.1.4, 5–6 (V.121); *ACO* I.1.7, 46 (CA.103).

[103] *ACO* I.1.3, 67–70 (V.110-2); cf. *CTh* 16.5.66, *CJ* I.5.6; *ACO* I.4, 204 (CC.280).

[104] *ACO* I.1.3, 68:15–16 (V.111).

[105] Cf. Cyril's complaints: *ACO* I.4, 230 (CC.300).

[106] *ACO* I.1.3, 68:18–20 (V.111): *καὶ μηδένα τολμᾶν τὰς αὐτοῦ Νεστορίου τοῦ ἀθεμίτου τε καὶ ἱεροσύλου ἀσεβεῖς βίβλους περὶ τῆς εὐαγοῦς τῶν ὀρθοδόξων θρησκείας καὶ κατὰ τῶν δογμάτων τῆς ἐν Ἐφέσωι τῶν ἐπισκόπων ἁγίας συνόδου κατέχειν ἢ ἀναγινώσκειν ἢ μεταγράφειν.*

Secondly, we examine the reception of Ephesus (and the idea of 'Nicaea' it embodied) in Vincent of Lérins *Commonitorium*, composed in southern Gaul in 434.[107] Ignorant of any conciliar documentation from the Easterners (or even of any dispute between the bishops at all), Vincent relied solely for his understanding of Ephesus on the Cyrilline *acta* of 22 June. This session comprised, for him, the entire work of the council: the 'whole body of priests assembled, nearly 200 in number',[108] so that 'by their consentient determination the reverence due to ancient truth might be duly and solemnly confirmed, and the blasphemy of profane novelty condemned; which, having been done, that impious Nestorius was lawfully and deservedly adjudged to be opposed to catholic antiquity, and blessed Cyril to be in agreement with it'.[109] Further evidence for Vincent's sole reliance on the 22 June proceedings comes in his list of fathers whose extracts the council quoted—Vincent omits reference to Amphilochius and Atticus, who had featured in the 22 July document but not the 22 June document.[110] We are thus reminded that the primary early circulation of the Cyrilline *acta* was via the 22 June proceedings—Cyril's circulation of the 22 July session only began in earnest after the *Commonitorium* was written, and only then among his allies.

Possessed only of the record of 22 June, Vincent entirely absorbed the self-presentation of Cyril's council. Nestorius is characterized as arrogantly preferring novelty over tradition[111], Capeolus' letter is used to reiterate the importance of submitting to the past[112], and the consensus of the 'fathers' is portrayed as central to the resolution of doctrinal dispute.[113] Cyril's gathering was *beata illa synodus*,[114] whose holy and wise bishops humbly took care to 'hand down nothing to posterity but what they had themselves received from their fathers',[115] and who deliberated under divine guidance.[116] Vincent also takes at face value the special role of Cyril at the council: he is *beati Cyrilli*,[117] whose teaching was in agreement with catholic antiquity;[118] who 'adorns the

[107] Vincent, *Comm.* 29.7 (*CCSL* 64, 190).

[108] Vincent, *Comm.* 29.8 (*CCSL* 64, 190:36–7): universis sacerdotibus, qui illo ducenti fere numero. convenerant.

[109] Vincent, *Comm.* 29.9 (*CCSL* 64, 190:40–5): ut scilicet rite atque sollemniter ex eorum consensu atque decreto antiqui dogmatis religio confirmaretur et profanae novitatis blasphemia condemnaretur. Quod cum ita factum foret, iure meritoque impius ille Nestorius, catholicae vetustati contrarius, beatus vero Cyrillus sacrosanctae antiquitati consentaneus iudicatus est.

[110] Vincent, *Comm.* 30.1–5 (*CCSL* 64, 191), cf. T. Graumann (2010), 'Towards the Reception of the Council of Ephesus (431): Public Sentiment and Early Theological Responses', *SP* 45, 158.

[111] Vincent, *Comm.* 11.1–4 (*CCSL* 64, 160).

[112] Vincent, *Comm.* 31.1 (*CCSL* 64, 191–2), 33.1 (194).

[113] Vincent, *Comm.* 29 (*CCSL* 64, 189–90).

[114] Vincent, *Comm.* 30.6 (*CCSL* 64, 191:23).

[115] Vincent, *Comm.* 31.5 (*CCSL* 64, 192:22–4): sed omnimodis praecaverent, ne aliquid posteris traderent, quod ipsi a patribus non accepissent.

[116] Vincent, *Comm.* 33.2 (*CCSL* 64, 194:10).

[117] Vincent, *Comm.* 33.1 (*CCSL* 64, 194:5–6).

[118] Vincent, *Comm.* 29.9 (*CCSL* 64, 190).

Alexandrian Church' as the successor to Peter, Athanasius, and Theophilus;[119] and who sought to have 'the ancient doctrines of the faith confirmed, and novel inventions condemned'.[120] The written proceedings ensured that Cyril's own status would be inextricably linked to that of his council.

More strikingly still, Vincent allowed the methodology of the 22 June session to shape his entire theological thesis. Vincent argued that a general council of the church possessed a unique authority, and recognized only Nicaea as unquestionably occupying that status.[121] His articulation of the way that a council can reaffirm the same orthodox faith whilst adapting it to a new context seems to be a direct application of the method for affirming Cyril's *Second Letter* at the 22 June session, as well as being influenced by the council's defence of 'Theotokos' ('designating an old article of the faith by the characteristic of a new name'[122]). In this way, Vincent actually made possible a very high status for Ephesus: it was a divinely guided universal council in which the unanimous acclamations of the assembled bishops did not merely affirm the fathers of the past, but, in a sense, joined with them.[123] The council of Ephesus becomes, for Vincent, not merely an example of a properly 'patristic' methodology at work but the most recent instantiation of a living tradition, in which the Nicene faith of the fathers was 'cared for, smoothed, polished' and received 'proof, illustration, definiteness', so that the seeds which they had previously sown were allowed 'to flourish and ripen'.[124]

Vincent's understanding of orthodoxy is thus not (as it is often caricatured) 'excessively static'[125] but is, rather, remarkably dynamic, articulating how the same deposit of faith could be mediated through the consentient determinations of the councils. Vincent venerates 'antiquity', yet that antiquity is not limited to the apostolic past (or even to Nicaea), but rather includes the pronoucements of Ephesus, which definitively laid down the rule of faith.[126] The *Commonitorium*, in short, is not only testament to the early reception

[119] Vincent, *Comm*. 30.2 (*CCSL* 64, 191:7–8): venerandus Cyrillus, qui nunc Alexandrinam inlustrat ecclesiam.

[120] Vincent, *Comm*. 33.1 (*CCSL* 64, 194:7–8): antiqua fidei dogmata confirmari cuperet, novita vero adinuenta damnari.

[121] Cf. Vincent, *Comm*. 4–5 (*CCSL* 64, 150–3).

[122] Vincent, *Comm*. 23.18 (*CCSL* 64, 180:92–3): plerumque propter intellegentiae lucem non novum fidei sensum novae appellationis proprietate signando. The affirmation of 'Theotokos' at Ephesus thus mirrors the affirmation of 'Homoousios' at Nicaea.

[123] Cf. Vincent, *Comm*. 33.2–4 (*CCSL* 64, 194).

[124] Vincent, *Comm*. 23.13 (*CCSL* 64, 179:56–7), 23.13 (179:58–9), 23.12 (179:54): excurentur, limentur, poliantur; evidentiam, lucem, distinctionem; floreat et maturescat.

[125] Y. Congar (1964), *Tradition and the Life of the Church* (London: Burns & Oates), 71.

[126] Cf. Vincent, *Comm*. 29.8 (*CCSL* 64, 190).

of Ephesus, but also represents the first creative development of Cyril's articulation of the 'rejuvenating reception' of the Nicene faith.[127]

Thirdly, we examine the early reception of Ephesus in the Armenian Church. Even before replacing Rabbula as bishop of Edessa in 435, Ibas had been promoting Antiochene theology (especially that of Theodore) just as fervently as Rabbula had attacked it.[128] Ibas ensured that a delegation of Armenian scholars sent by Bishop Sahak and working in Edessa returned home with Armenian translations of Theodore's writings, and a covering letter denouncing the false teaching of Rabbula and Acacius of Melitene. An incensed Acacius wrote to Sahak (*c.*434) to deny the charges of theopaschitism being made against him. As well as claiming to stand on the teaching of the 318 bishops of Nicaea[129], Acacius made a striking assertion:

> But we are afraid that perhaps some followers of the teaching of Theodore of Mopsuestia and of the evil plague of Nestorius might be found [among you and] affect the simple people. For in regard to his[130] writing which had remained, and especially [the one] which was written about the incarnation, when the question [concerning its orthodoxy] became apparent, a decree was issued by the holy bishops at the oecumenical council which took place in the city of Ephesus to gather the entire writing and to burn [it].[131]

Although there remains a question about the reliability of the manuscript transmission[132], it seems that Acacius was exploiting Sahak's ignorance of Ephesus to make the condemnation of Theodore's writings part of the official achievement of the council. This is, of course, a substantial embellishment of its activity (there was no decree ordering books to be burned), but a work of Theodore's *was* condemned (albeit anonymously) at the proceedings of 22 July (at which Acacius was recorded as present). It is possible, then, that, following Cyril, Acacius also sought to reshape the reception of Ephesus around the 22 July session? We know that Acacius had begun to demand the condemnation of Theodore's writings in the course of 432–3,[133] and that his ally Rabbula had, around the same time, launched an attack upon Theodore's memory, and had his books burned.[134] The desire to fashion Ephesus

[127] Vincent, *Comm*. 22.7 (*CCSL* 64, 177:30); cf. the penetrating recent analysis in T. G. Guarino (2013), *Vincent of Lérins and the Development of Christian Doctrine* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic), esp. 16–23.

[128] Cf. C. Rammelt (2008), *Ibas von Edessa: Rekonstruktion einer Biographie und dogmatischen Position zwischen den Fronten* (Berlin: de Gruyter), 111–234.

[129] J. Ismireantz (1901), *The Book of Letters* (Tiflis), 15.

[130] That is, Theodore: K. Sarkissian (1965), *The Council of Chalcedon and the Armenian Church* (London: SPCK), 115.

[131] Ismireantz, *Letters*, 15; English translation: G. Winkler (1985), 'An Obscure Chapter in Armenian Church History (428–439)', *REArm* 19, 109–10.

[132] Winkler, 'Obscure Chapter', 130–5.

[133] *ACO* I.4, 304 (CC.172).

[134] Cyril, *Ep*. 73 (*ACO* IV.1, 89); cf. Ibas' *Letter to Mari* (*ACO* II.1.3, 32–4).

into a more potent weapon in the nascent campaign against Theodore thus likely provided another key motivation for the shift towards the 22 July proceedings.

In a further letter to the Armenian Church, Acacius reiterated the construal of Nicaea expressed in Cyril's *acta*. It was necessary to 'keep firm to the religion of the fathers and to the teaching of the 318 holy bishops, which they taught as the rule of faith with great veracity and deliberation and by the command of the Holy Spirit', and to follow the council of Ephesus, at which the faith of Nicaea was re-established, and the error of Nestorius and Theodore overcome.[135] Acacius construed the nature of the Nicene faith confirmed at Ephesus in a 'hard-line' Cyrillian manner, as entirely ruling out all forms of Antiochene Christology.

Sahak's response was to send a delegation to Proclus in 435, to seek clarity on these doctrinal matters, and to find out more about the repudiation of Nestorius' doctrine at Ephesus.[136] The *libellus* that his delegation presented made clear that the Armenian Church firmly adhered to the faith of Nicaea, and simply wanted to know whether Acacius or Theodore was its true exponent.[137] Proclus' response, his great *Tomus ad Armenios*, did little to address this specific issue, simply ending with a stereotyped injunction to guard the Nicene faith.[138] More significant was the Armenian synod at Aštišat (435/6), which met on the delegation's return.[139] Here the bishops 'accepted [the decisions of] the two hundred fathers in Ephesus . . . by spreading [them] in [their] pastoral communications'.[140] This suggests that the reception of Ephesus in the Armenian Church was conducted via the circulation of its conciliar documents—Winkler's lengthy examination concludes that the synod received (perhaps in a single volume) the conciliar proceedings, the canons, and Proclus' *Tomus*.[141]

In this fascinating example of the early reception of Ephesus, then, we note that it was no longer sufficient for the Armenians to confess 'Nicaea' alone—they had rather to acknowledge the decision of the fathers of Ephesus in authoritatively confirming Nicaea and rejecting the errors of Nestorius. For, as one of the Armenian delegates put it, the Ephesine fathers 'firmly held on to the original faith of the three hundred fathers [of Nicaea], and they

[135] Ismireantz, *Letters*, 20, translation: Sarkissian, *Chalcedon*, 117–18; cf. N. G. Garsoïan (1999), *L'Église arménienne et le grand schism d'Orient* (*CSCO* 574) (Leuven: Peeters), 117–20; Constas, *Proclus*, 101, n.71.

[136] Cf. Winkler, 'Obscure Chapter', 113.

[137] Syriac text: Nestorius, *Liber* (Bedjan, 594–6); translation: Constas, *Proclus*, 102:12–14, 103:18–19; cf. Schwartz's suggested Greek retroversion in *ACO* IV.2, xxvii.

[138] *ACO* IV.2, 195:15–18; cf. Kinzig, *Formulae*, II, 84.

[139] Cf. Winkler, 'Obscure Chapter', 115–30.

[140] Ismireantz, *Letters*, 20, translation: Winker, 'Obscure Chapter', 121.

[141] Winkler, 'Obscure Chapter', 129.

condemned anybody should he dare to propose some newly generated and alien faith; [they suggested] however, to build upon the same and to teach the very same faith'.[142] We see here again the subtle tension in the council's contribution: it 'built upon' Nicaea whilst simultaneously teaching 'the very same faith'. The reference to the condemnation of additions to the Creed seems to allude to the 22 July session, which would further support our suggestion that it was this later session that was being increasingly prioritized by Acacius, Cyril and other hardliners.

Yet, in receiving these conciliar proceedings along with the *Tomus*, the character of the reception of Ephesus was subtly modified yet again. For by reiterating the council's attack on key dyophysite tenets, but avoiding the explicit condemnation of Theodore, Proclus' *Tomus* shifted the emphasis back towards a 'moderate' interpretation of Ephesus I, in line with the Peace of 433, rather than the hard-line reading encouraged by Acacius. Indeed, Sahak's post-Aštišat letter to Proclus included a modified version of the Nicene Creed, which was then glossed according to a gently Theodoran Christology.[143] In this way, Sahak used his stated fidelity to Nicaea as a shield to resist the doctrinal implications of the Ephesine confirmation of Nicaea. The tangled history of the Armenian reception of Ephesus, in short, demonstrates the flexibility of the Ephesine reception, and the ways in which its documentary presentation allowed it to embody a variety of different ideas of 'Nicaea'.

Fourthly and finally, we analyse the reception of Ephesus in Socrates' *Church History* (439).[144] Although heavily influenced by Athanasius' polemic in his depiction of Nicaea and the subsequent triumph of the orthodox over Arianism,[145] Socrates does not straightforwardly absorb Cyril's self-presentation of Ephesus in relating the career of Nestorius. He retains, rather, an independence of perspective: thus Socrates follows Cyril in emphasizing Nestorius' denial of 'Theotokos', and his arrogant dismissal of the traditional teaching of the fathers,[146] but, unlike Cyril, blames Nestorius' laziness and

[142] Ismireantz, *Letters*, 1–2, translation: Winker, 'Obscure Chapter', 114–15. This document concluded with an adapted form of the Nicene Creed, incorporating the Theotokos—the fluidity with which credal texts were cited could allow the 'same' Creed to be re-expressed with (in this case) Ephesus-related additions.

[143] Ismireantz, *Letters*, 9–13, translation: Garsoïan, *L'Église arménienne*, 432–7; cf. Kinzig, *Formulae*, II, 84–5. Winkler suggests that the peculiarities in the extant text are due to the editorial interventions of later Armenian historians, who were shocked at the Antiochene character of Sahak's gloss of the Creed, cf. Winker, 'Obscure Chapter', 136–43. More widely on the variety of 'Nicene' creeds extant from the Armenian Church of this period, see L. Frivold (1981), *The Incarnation: A Study in the Doctrine of the Incarnation in the Armenian Church in the Fifth and Sixth Centuries according to the Book of Letters* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget), 169–93.

[144] Cf. Graumann, 'Reception', 151.

[145] Cf. P. van Nuffelen (2004), *Un héritage de paix et de piété: étude sur les histoires ecclésiastiques de Socrate et de Sozomène* (Leuven: Peeters), 313–406.

[146] Soc., *H.E.* VII.32.

ignorance as much as his pride,[147] finds him innocent of the Samosatan heresy,[148] and notes that during his time in Constantinople he enthusiastically imposed the Nicene faith.[149] Socrates seems slightly bemused, indeed, that the controversy should have necessitated the convocation of an oecumenical council.[150]

Socrates' brief narrative of the council also fails to follow Cyril's construal: he describes a scene of confusion, in which two partisan assemblies mutually anathematized one another,[151] with Cyril himself depicted as acting aggressively, motivated by personal enmity.[152] There is no neat resolution to the story either—even after the Peace of 433, Socrates laments, the people of Constantinople remained divided regarding Nestorius.[153] It is possible that the range of sources available to Socrates allowed him to take a more informed, less partisan, line: he seems to be aware, for instance, of Nestorius' *Letter to Scholasticus*,[154] and knows of the synods that John of Antioch's group held in late 431.[155] Nonetheless, Socrates does focus his attention on 22 June session, and narrates its key features. Despite not following Cyril's construal, Socrates still regards 22 June as the central and decisive event of Ephesus.[156] It is with regard to this session that the whole council is dated (albeit inaccurately[157]), and the banishment of Nestorius (some four years later) is brought forward to follow on directly from the conclusion to the session.[158]

The evidence of the *Church History*, then, suggests that even those who were not partisans of Cyril could not avoid gravitating towards the proceedings of his council (rather than John's), and towards the session of 22 June in particular, as the fundamental conciliar event of 431. As Graumann has suggested, the simple fact that Cyril's council convened first, and publically claimed to have examined Nestorius' doctrine and deposed him as heretical, left an indelible impression, and ensured that these events formed the crux of most narratives of Ephesus.[159] Despite Cyril's increasing prioritization of the 22 July session among his allies, then, the centre of gravity in the reception of Ephesus would always tend towards the 22 June. The 'minimal' reception of Cyril's Ephesus was thus, by the late 430s, very hard to resist. And yet Socrates' account also demonstrates that beyond this limited acknowledgement of certain key events, the construal of Ephesus I remained highly flexible. Socrates did not dutifully reiterate Cyril's presentation of the great and holy council deliberating in the presence of Christ, or acknowledge any special interpretive role for Cyril's writings. Most significantly, there is no recognition of the special role of Ephesus in the authoritative confirmation of the Nicene

[147] Soc., *H.E.* VII.32.10. [148] Soc., *H.E.* VII.32.5–9. [149] Soc., *H.E.* VII.29, 31.
[150] Soc., *H.E.* VII.29.7. [151] Soc., *H.E.* VII.34.9–10. [152] Soc., *H.E.* VII.34.4.
[153] Soc., *H.E.* VII.34.14. [154] Soc., *H.E.* VII.34.10, cf. *ACO* I.4, 51–3 (CC.103).
[155] Soc., *H.E.* VII.34.13, cf. Nuffelen, *Héritage*, 474–5. [156] Soc., *H.E.* VII.34.6–7.
[157] Soc., *H.E.* VII.34.12. [158] Soc., *H.E.* VII.34.11.
[159] Graumann, 'Reception', 153–5.

faith—the idea of 'Nicaea' that Cyril's council laboured to expound is almost entirely absent.

To conclude, Cyril had promoted his Ephesine council as the locus of Nicaea's authoritative confirmation, and by the assiduous circulation of its *acta* had sought to ensure that the Creed would be read according to the particular textual hermeneutic he had therein established. However, it has been argued that the reception of Cyril's council, and the idea of 'Nicaea' that it embodied, was by no means straightforward. Rather than marking the formal recognition of his council, the Peace of 433 had in fact represented a significant blow to his cause. The Formula had its origins in a statement of Cyril's conciliar opponents, left his own council unmentioned, and affirmed 'Nicaea' only in the barest and most uncontroversial of terms. Moreover, Cyril's acceptance of the Formula was portrayed by his enemies as involving the renunciation of his council and his writings, and the tacit acknowledgement that a 'Nestorian' Christology was concordant with the Nicene faith.

Cyril's fleet-footed response was to reshape the documentary reception of Ephesus by shifting the focus to the 22 July proceedings, and distributing the written record of this session. This served two useful purposes. As a strategy of *defence*, it helped to answer those opponents who had accused him of adding to Nicaea (since 'Canon 7' represented a firm conciliar statement of the Creed's sole sufficiency). As a strategy of *attack*, it dramatically expanded the scope of the council's condemnation to include Theodore and his adherents (since at the session Theodore's exposition had been condemned as contrary to Nicaea), reassuring Cyril's more radical allies, and assisting their nascent campaign against Theodore. When one takes into account the complete silence on all sides regarding the 22 July session until late 432, and the striking way that its rhetorical intentions fit the context of 432–3, it seems quite possible that this period marks not only the initial *circulation* of this document, but its *composition*.

The key point, however, is that in making this shift, Cyril himself opened up divergent trajectories of reception of Ephesus I, each with a particular documentary basis: a 'minimal' reception orientated around 22 June, and a 'maximal' (or 'hard-line') reception orientated around 22 July. The evidence suggests that, throughout the 430s, the 22 June session remained more widely known, and was the natural 'centre of gravity' for the reception of Ephesus, whilst the 22 July session became prominent mainly among Cyril's allies. Moreover, since both sessions quoted the Nicene Creed in full, this meant that the Creed too was now being read and interpreted in different documentary contexts. The crisis of 448–51 was thus in large part attributable to these divergent trajectories coming into open conflict with one another—and it was a crisis of Cyril's own making.

The reception of Nicaea-through-Ephesus was, in short, both slower and more complicated than has often been assumed. The prominence of Nicaea

(detached from its Ephesine interpretation) in the Formula of 433 did not seal the acceptance of Cyril's council but rather provided the means by which Cyril's construal of Nicaea could be evaded. The Armenian Church, similarly, was able to recognise the Ephesine council, but retained, precisely through an appeal to Nicaea, its own preference for a moderate dyophysite Christology. The imperial constitution of 435/6 was notably underdeveloped in its affirmation of Ephesus, and the evidence of Socrates' *Church History* suggests that the reception of Cyril's council in terms of its confirmation of Nicaea remained limited even in the late 430s. Nonetheless, Vincent's *Commonitorium* demonstrates that there were genuinely fruitful attempts to develop the idea of 'Nicaea' that Cyril's council had articulated, and even Socrates recognized that Cyril's session of 22 June had become an unavoidable part of the story of Ephesus.

ANTIOCHENE TRAJECTORIES

It has been contended that the years after 431 witnessed a series of divergent 'receptions' of Ephesus, and so of the different ideas of 'Nicaea' that they embodied. In this section, we consider two distinct Antiochene trajectories.

The first, a 'moderate' trajectory, is associated with John of Antioch. John and others came gradually to abandon their adherence to the *conciliabulum* as the authentic council of Ephesus, and began to recognize the legitimacy of Cyril's council (at least insofar as it had deposed Nestorius and confirmed the Nicene faith). However, by interpreting the work of Cyril's council via the Formula of Reunion (which could be construed as the final and determinative expression of the achievement of Ephesus), they were able to retain a place for their own particular 'reading' of the Creed. The basic Cyrilline cypher of 'Nicaea and Ephesus' could be affirmed, whilst being interpreted so as to leave the key tenets of a dyophysite Christology untouched.

By contrast, the second Antiochene trajectory took a much more 'hard-line' position. A small but vocal minority in the East continued to regard the Cyrilline proceedings of Ephesus as invalid, and so refused to 'receive' the council in any sense. Fidelity to the Nicene faith, on this construal, was traced not through the Cyrilline council but in opposition to it, and Cyril's conciliar documents were exploited to show his tyrannical behaviour and heretical doctrine. This 'minority report' in the construal of Nicene orthodoxy thus further demonstrates the creative potential and problematic flexibility of the idea of 'Nicaea' during these years.

We assess firstly, then, the 'moderate' Antiochene trajectory.

Throughout 431–2, John and the Easterners remained committed to the authority of the *conciliabulum*, and regarded Cyril's gathering as illegitimate.

It is evident, however, that at some point late in the peace negotiations, John began to concede a little ground. In a letter to Cyril, Sixtus, and Maximian, John dignified Cyril's assembly with the title of 'council' for the first time in any of the Easterners' writings, and described how it had overthrown Nestorius.[160] With exquisite restraint, he then glossed over the controversy (and mutual anathematizations!) that had ensued:

> But when we hastened thither, because we found that this had happened, we were grieved. For this reason when a difference arose between us and the holy council, and between us and the many things done and said, we returned to our own churches and cities, since we did not agree with the holy council at that time because of the indictment of deposition carried out against Nestorius.[161]

John then depicted himself as the humble peacemaker:

> it has pleased us, for the removal of all strife and for the sake of arbitrating peace for the churches of God, to agree to the vote of the holy council carried out against Nestorius, to hold him as deposed, and to anathematize his infamous teachings, because the churches with us have always kept the true and blameless faith.[162]

John thus re-narrated the events of Ephesus so that the fact of episcopal division was not entirely removed, but Cyril's assembly was acknowledged as legitimate, and the deposition of Nestorius accepted, for the sake of peace.[163] One can entirely understand how this volte-face prompted ferocious anger from some in John's ranks, who forever after regarded him as a traitor to the cause.[164] And yet, there was great tactical wisdom here. John's acknowledgement of Cyril's council was, in fact, very limited: of all its activities, only the deposition of Nestorius on 22 June was explicitly recognized. There was no acceptance of the particular construal of the Nicene faith that Cyril's council promulgated. John realized that by sacrificing Nestorius, he could 'receive' Cyril's council on his own terms, limiting its achievement to the deposition

[160] Cyril, *Ep.* 35 (*ACO* I.1.4, 33:10–15 [V.130]).

[161] Cyril, *Ep.* 35 (ACO I.1.4, 33:15–20 [V.130]): *συνδεδραμηκότες δὲ καὶ ἡμεῖς, εἶτα τοῦτο γεγονὸς εὑρόντες λελυπήμεθα. ταύτης ἕνεκα τῆς αἰτίας διαφορᾶς μεταξὺ γενομένης ἡμῶν τε καὶ τῆς ἁγίας συνόδου καὶ πολλῶν μεταξὺ πεπραγμένων τε καὶ εἰρημένων, ὑπεστρέψαμεν εἰς τὰς ἑαυτῶν ἐκκλησίας τε καὶ πόλεις, οὐ συνενεχθέντες τὸ τηνικάδε τῆι ἁγίαι συνόδωι δι' ὑπογραφῆς εἰς τὴν ἐξενεχθεῖσαν κατὰ Νεστορίου τῆς καθαιρέσεως ψῆφον.*

[162] Cyril, *Ep.* 35 (ACO I.1.4, 33:23–7 [V.130]): *συνήρεσεν εἰς ἀναίρεσιν ἁπάσης φιλονεικίας καὶ ὑπὲρ τοῦ τὴν εἰρήνην βραβευθῆναι ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἡμᾶς αὐτοὺς νῦν συνθέσθαι τῆι ψήφωι τῆς ἁγίας συνόδου τῆι ἐξενεχθείσηι κατὰ Νεστορίου ἔχειν τε αὐτὸν καθηιρημένον καὶ ἀναθεματίσαι τὰς δυσφήμους αὐτοῦ διδασκαλίας διὰ τὸ τὰς παρ' ἡμῖν ἐκκλησίας τὴν ὀρθὴν ἀεὶ καὶ ἀβέβηλον ἐσχηκέναι πίστιν.*

[163] As noted above, in the analysis of Ephesus, John himself never defended Nestorius' doctrine during 431, and seems to have been far less convinced by his orthodoxy than the more radical elements within his own camp, like Alexander of Hierapolis.

[164] e.g. *ACO* I.4, 213–21 (CC.291).

of one man at one session, and thereby avoiding the acceptance of the Cyrilline idea of 'Nicaea' that the conciliar *acta* enshrined.[165] Moreover, by proposing the Formula (which had its origins in the proceedings of the *conciliabulum*) as the basis for the ensuing settlement, John was able to construe that document as the final and fullest expression of Cyril's conciliar achievement.[166] Indeed, after 433 the Formula was increasingly quoted *within* Cyril's *Laetentur Caeli*, so that its authorship came to be associated with Cyril himself.

By carefully defining the character of its reception, then, John was able almost entirely to neuter the distinctive contribution of Cyril's council. Indeed, it was precisely the success of this strategy that further encouraged Cyril and his allies to remodel the reception of Ephesus around the 22 July proceedings.

The further development of John's strategy can be traced in two documents from 437/8, composed in the context of the Cyrillian campaign against Theodore and Diodore.[167]

Firstly, we have a synodical letter of John to Proclus of 437.[168] Proclus had sent Aristolaus to investigate whether the imperial constitution against Nestorius and his adherents was being properly enforced in the East, and John wrote to provide a formal response. He began by carefully reiterating the terms of the Peace of 433: that 'we anathematize and cast aside everything that he [Nestorius] wrongly thought and said, whether in writings or in preaching'.[169] John also dutifully parroted the construal of Nestorius' doctrine found in Cyril's 22 June proceedings: it was contrary to 'the correct faith of the fathers',[170] and 'those who follow it and those who think the same as he did, are foreign to the godly creed'.[171] Moreover, unlike his statement of 432/3, John now removed any hint of discord from his narrative of the events of 431:

> All of the most religious bishops of the East did the same as those elsewhere: both we, and all the God-loving bishops from everywhere, convened in Ephesus, and

[165] Indeed, Cyril later complained that many in the East regarded Nestorius as having been deposed *only* for denying 'Theotokos', and nothing else: Cyril, *Ep.* 61 (*ACO* I.4, 207:24–5 [CC.284]).

[166] Crucially, John's recognition of Cyril's council did not thereby commit others to taking the same view, since we have noted above that the actual text of the Formula at no point required its acceptance.

[167] Elements of this controversy remain rather opaque—the surest guide remains L. Abramowski (1955/6), 'Der Streit um Diodor und Theodor zwischen den beiden ephesinischen Konzilien', *ZKG* 67, 252–87; although now see also J. Behr (ed.) (2011), *The Case against Diodore and Theodore: Texts and Their Contexts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 88–100.

[168] *ACO* I.4, 208–10 (CC.287), cf. Abramowski, 'Der Streit', 268.

[169] *ACO* I.4, 208:33–5 (CC.287.1): quae autem male sapuit vel dixit seu in conscriptis sive in expositionibus, haec omnes abiecimus et anathematizavimus [. . .].

[170] *ACO* I.4, 208:32 (CC.287.1): quam contra rectam patrum fidem [. . .].

[171] *ACO* I.4, 208:35 (CC.287.1): qui ea excipiunt et qui [ea] eadem quae ille, aliene a pia confessione sapient.

> we assented to them, anathematizing and deposing the overthrown Nestorius, and we agreed and consented that nothing should be added or taken away from the statement which the holy fathers made at Nicaea. Rather what is in it should endure, and the confession of faith of the holy fathers who were gathered in Nicaea should be venerated.[172]

The council of Ephesus was here portrayed as one united body, in which Cyril, John, and all the bishops together anathematized and overthrew Nestorius. John was now fully committed to recognizing the authority of Cyril's council, and its decisive confirmation of Nicaea against Nestorius' doctrine. Crucially, however, John defined the key work of the council as its affirmation that 'nothing should be added or taken away from the statement which the holy fathers made at Nicaea'. This was not an acceptance of Cyril's 22 July session (about which John remained ignorant), but was rather a reassertion of the agenda of the *conciliabulum*, which had formally articulated its position in precisely this manner.[173] Cyril's council was thus acknowledged, but its rulings were construed according to the terminology of the *conciliabulum*. In this way, the distinct characters of the two rival councils were subtly elided on terms favourable to John. The achievement of Cyril's council with regard to Nicaea was thus decisively reinterpreted: there was no mention of Cyril's writings as necessary for rightly interpreting the Creed, but rather a bland affirmation of the sole authority and sufficiency of Nicaea, replicating the position of the Easterners in 431 and the Formula in 433.

With this innocuous interpretation of 'Nicaea through Ephesus' established, John could safely affirm that the Nicene confession had been strengthened and confirmed.[174] His passionate defence of the Nicene Creed continued with a twin list of its true and false interpreters, again craftily drawing on the documents of the *conciliabulum*.[175] And, to hammer home his own Nicene credentials, John then quoted the entire text of the Creed (including the anathemas), in a variant form which similarly echoed the Easterners' earlier texts.[176]

[172] *ACO* I.4, 209:1–6 (CC.287.1): quod fecerunt omnes religiosissimi Orientis episcopi, sicut et hi qui ubique sunt, id est tam nos quam cuncti qui undique in Ephesum convenerunt deo amicissimi episcopi, quibus assensimus Nestorium [anathematizantes] deponentesque deiectum et complacemus atque consentimus ut nihil neque adiciator [neque] dematur de expositione in Nicaea a sanctis patribus facta, sed ut permaneatur in ea et sit venerabilis haec ipsa de fide confessio sanctorum patrum qui in Nicaenum congregati sunt [. . .].

[173] Cf. *ACO* I.1.7, 70:6–8 (CA.48.4)—the reference in this earlier document to both addition *and subtraction* is unique among the Ephesine material, further suggesting that John's 437 letter is alluding to this statement.

[174] *ACO* I.4, 209:6–7 (CC.287.1).

[175] *ACO* I.4, 209:14–28 (CC.287.2), drawing upon *ACO* I.1.3, 39:12–16 (V.96), 41:27–37 (V.97).

[176] *ACO* I.4, 209:29–38 (CC.287.3). The inclusion of 'sat at the Father's right hand' mirrors the Easterners' text (*ACO* I.1.3, 39 [V.96]), and Theodore's (*Hom. cat.* 7), cf. Dossetti, *Simbolo*, 69–70, 118–19, 165–7.

In short, then, John accepted the Ephesine council, but in doing so significantly reshaped its reception. The great work of Cyril's council in confirming Nicaea was acknowledged, but reinterpreted in a deliberately simplistic and entirely non-threatening manner. In this way, the recognition of Cyril's council actually became a means of protecting the kind of traditional Antiochene construal of the Nicene faith that the *conciliabulum* had advanced back in 431. The memory of the Easterners' council may have been sacrificed as a strategic necessity, but its agenda was being pursued by other means.

We glimpse the same strategy at work in another synodical letter of John from 438. Proclus, angry at the continued promotion of Theodore's works by Ibas and others, had encouraged John to affirm his *Tomus* and, crucially, to anathematize an anonymous florilegium of extracts from Theodore.[177] In response, John convened a synod in Antioch in the summer of 438, accepting Proclus' *Tomus* (as a largely benign restatement of the doctrine of the Formula), but refusing to anathematize Theodore (whom the synod knew to be the author of the extracts).[178] The synod defended its position by appealing to the idea of 'Nicaea' expressed in John's letter of the previous year:

> We have written a synodical letter to you, in which we have accepted the volume previously sent to us [the Tomus] and we have rejected those who have dared by additions or deletions to corrupt the faith which was defined at Nicaea by our holy and most blessed fathers, and we confess that our Lord, Jesus Christ, is the one only begotten Son of God. For thus we know the differences and the properties of the natures, but nevertheless the supreme and inseparable unity; and at the same time we think that those who introduce a duality of Sons or Christs are aliens from the true faith, and we embrace that holy saying of your reverence, which stated, in agreement with the Holy Scriptures: 'One Lord, Jesus Christ, although the difference of the natures is not ignored'.[179]

Thus, as in his letter of 437, John emphasized the sufficiency of Nicaea and the rejection of any change to it, and provided an exposition of the Nicene faith based upon the Formula. In this, John showed how easily the terms of the Formula could be exploited—he foregrounded its teaching concerning the

[177] *ACO* IV.1, 140–3, cf. Abramowski, 'Der Streit', 271–3. Perhaps this presentation of Theodoran extracts was intended to echo the list of citations by which the Ephesine council had condemned Nestorius.

[178] Cf. Constas, *Proclus*, 116, n.108.

[179] *ACO* I.5, 313:34–314:3 (CS.14.15): unde synodicas ad te fecimus litteras, in quibus et directum ante nobis tomum suscepimus et eos qui additamentis vel ablationibus corrumpere ausi sunt fidem quae in Nicaea definita est a sanctis et beatissimis patribus, abdicavimus, confitentes unum dei [filium] unigenitum, dominum nostrum Iesum Christum. Sic enim differentias proprietatesque novimus naturarum, verumtamen summam et inseparabilem adunationem; simul et eos qui dualitatem filiorum aud Christorum introducunt, alienos existimamus a recta fide, amplectentes sanctam illam tuae vererabilitatis vocem quae sanctis scripturis concordans dixit: unus dominus Iesus Christus, tametsi non ignoratur differentia naturarum.

distinction of the natures, and then attributed it to Cyril's pen.[180] John also provided a list of orthodox fathers, to demonstrate that they agreed with Theodore. The list included 'blessed Eustathius, Bishop of Antioch, who was given a place of honour for the true faith at the Council of Nicaea'.[181] John was reminding Cyril that the see of Antioch, just as much as that of Alexandria, was prominent at Nicaea, and that the faith transmitted by the Antiochene fathers was just as authentically Nicene. Cyril's development of the 'father' concept could in this way be used by John to demonstrate that Theodore stood in the lineage of the true 'Nicene' fathers, rather than in the line of anti-Nicene heretics.[182]

John had thus demonstrated that the reception of Ephesus could be reshaped to express an Antiochene, rather than Cyrilline, idea of 'Nicaea'. The council's authoritative confirmation of Nicaea was emptied of its distinctively Cyrilline character, and became a means of reasserting the Easterners' own fidelity to Nicaea, whilst the theological meaning of Nicaea was derived from the harmless compromise statement of 433.[183] Further evidence of the success of John's strategy is found in Cyril's account of his agent Maximus' report from Antioch:

> He [Maximus] said that they pretend to confess the creed formulated at Nicaea by the fathers, but they misinterpret it. He urged me to interpret clearly the entire exposition of the fathers at Nicaea, in order that they might not carry off some people by explaining things one way instead of another. I have done this. Accordingly, he is bringing the rolls, so that he may present them to the most pious empresses and to the most Christ-loving and most pious emperor, for I had the book written on parchment.[184]

Maximus recognized that the principal achievement of Cyril's council—its authoritative articulation of the Nicene faith—was under major threat by 438.

[180] 'Your reverence' here refers to Cyril, to whom this version of the letter (the best surviving text) was sent.

[181] *ACO* I.5, 312:15–16 (CS.14.7): beatum Eustathium Antiochiae civitatis episcopum, qui praefuit pro recta fide in Nicaeno concilio [. . .].

[182] Cyril responded by trying to demonstrate that Theodore was not a 'father' in the way that Athanasius, Basil, and others were: Cyril, *Ep.* 67 (*ACO* I.1.4, 37–9 [V.133]); *Ep.* 68 (*ACO* I.4, 231–2 [CC.303]).

[183] Since Cyril's *Second Letter* was formally affirmed in the proceedings of 22 June 431, it is possible that John's minimal acceptance of this session, when combined with his emphasis upon the importance of the Formula of 433, helped to encourage the increasingly common pairing of the *Second Letter* with the *Laetentur Caeli* as an expression of Nicene orthodoxy (as seen, for instance, in Eusebius' plaint at Constantinople 448).

[184] Cyril, *Ep.* 70 (*Gr. 1431*, 17:2–7): *ἔφη δὲ ὅτι προσποιοῦνται μὲν ὁμολογεῖν τὸ σύμβολον τὸ ἐκτεθὲν ἐν τῆι Νικαίαι παρὰ τῶν πατέρων, παρεπμηνεύουσι δὲ αὐτό, καὶ προέτπεφέ με τὴν ἔκθεσιν πᾶσαν τῶν ἐν Νικαίαι ἐπμηνεῦσαι σαφῶς, ἵνα μὴ συναρπαζωσί τινες, ἕτερα ἀνθ' ἑτέρων ἐξηγούμενοι ὃ δὴ και πέπραχα. ἐπιφέρεται τοίνυν τοὺς τόμους ὥοτε προσενεχθῆναι καὶ ταῖσ εὐσεβεστάραις δεσποίναις καὶ τῶι φιλοχρίστωι καὶ εὐσεβεσυάτωι δεσπότηι, πεποίηκα γὰρ ἐν δέρμασι γενέσθαι τόμον.*

Cyril issued a substantial response, composing a lengthy epistle ('book') 'On the Holy Creed' and having it dispatched, on parchment, to the imperial court. This work thus represents Cyril's final attempt to reassert his idea of 'Nicaea', in the light of the apparent failure of his council (and *acta*) to achieve its widespread acceptance.

Cyril begins the letter by carefully shaping the memory of the Council of Nicaea itself, so that its character and aims more closely mirror those of Ephesus. Just as Cyril had presented his council as seeking to follow the footsteps of those who went before, along the Spirit-inspired path of orthodoxy, so the fathers of Nicaea are depicted as having done the same.[185] Yet Cyril's profoundly conservative understanding of the role of Nicaea and Ephesus is not static in its conservatism. Rather, he construes the role of a council as directing the path of a Church on the move, ensuring that she continues to 'walk' rightly.[186] Again, echoing his depiction of Ephesus, Cyril asserts that Christ was seated with the bishops of Nicaea, invisibly presiding, and applies the verse that Celestine had notably attributed to Ephesus (Mt. 18:20), to Nicaea.[187] Nicaea and Ephesus were being increasingly elided in Cyril's thought—whereas in 431 he had sought to model his Ephesine council upon Nicaea, by 438 he was conforming his depiction of Nicaea to the established presentation of his council of Ephesus.

Cyril also carefully sets the Nicene Creed within a 'patristic' context, as the necessary condition of reading it aright: it is 'the holy fathers, pastors of congregations, luminaries of churches, skilled masters of spirituality' who have 'kept the faith they set forth in a definition with a vigilance that cannot be faulted'.[188] The correct interpretation of the Creed is thus located in its subsequent reception by the orthodox fathers, who refuted erroneous understandings, and ensured the 'confirmation and security of those who tread straight the path of faith'.[189] Moreover, in these holy men 'the grace which comes through the Holy Spirit is infusing truth's light'[190]—again, Cyril's pneumatology provides the 'glue' holding together Scripture, the Creed, and its interpreters. Cyril's opponents misunderstand the Creed, then, not only because they interpret its individual words incorrectly, but also because they are 'carried off into a depraved interpretation due to their attachment to the

[185] Cyril, *Ep.* 55.4 (*ACO* I.1.4, 50:8–13 [V.135.4]).

[186] Cyril, *Ep.* 55.3 (*ACO* I.1.4, 50:6–8 [V.135.3]).

[187] Cyril, *Ep.* 55.4 (*ACO* I.1.4, 50:13–14 [V.135.4]); cf. *ACO* I.1.3, 55–6 (V.106.12).

[188] Cyril, *Ep.* 55.4 (*ACO* I.1.4, 50:20–2 [V.135.4]): *τὴν τοίνυν ἐκτεθεῖσαν παρ᾽ ἐκείνων καὶ ὁρισθεῖσαν πίστιν τετηρήκασιν ἀδιαβλήτως καὶ οἱ μετ᾽ αὐτοὺς γεγονότες ἅγιοι πατέρες καὶ ποιμένες λαῶν καὶ φωστῆρες ἐκκλησιῶν καὶ εὐτεχνέστατοι μυσταγωγοί.*

[189] Cyril, *Ep.* 55.4 (*ACO* I.1.4, 50:25–6 [V.135.4]): *εἰς βεβαίωσιν δὲ καὶ ἀσφάλειαν τοῖς ὀρθοποδοῦσι περὶ τὴν πίστιν* [. . .].

[190] Cyril, *Ep.* 55.4 (*ACO* I.1.4, 50:27 [V.135.4]): *τὸ τῆς ἀληθείας ἐνίησι φῶς ἡ διὰ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος χάρις.*

writings of certain people'.[191] The target is clear: if the Easterners persist in following the teaching of Diodore and Theodore, they cannot hope to read the Creed correctly.[192]

Having established this framework, Cyril then carefully articulates the role of Ephesus. That 'holy synod' was assembled 'by God's will', and 'gave a hallowed and precise judgement against Nestorius' evil dogmas'.[193] Moreover, along with its condemnation of Nestorius:

> it also imposed exactly the same sentence on the empty verbiage of any precursors or successors of his holding the equivalent views, and with the impudence to express them orally or in writing. For they followed up their single condemnation of one man for such profane nonsense with an attack not just on an individual but on the whole heretical chicanery (if I may so express it) that they have manufactured against the Church's truly religious doctrines by maintaining two Sons [. . .].[194]

Cyril here again sharpened Ephesus' teeth against his opponents by prioritizing the contribution of the 22 July session, at which Theodore's document had been condemned. In this way, the council's authoritative confirmation of Nicaea could be portrayed as directed not only against Nestorius but against the 'whole heretical chicanery'.[195] The scope of 'Canon 7' was thus widened into a blanket condemnation of Theodore's teaching as contrary to Nicaea.

Furthermore, Cyril here grounds his construal of the achievement of Ephesus explicitly in its *acta*, and explains how he 'included opinions, or statements, by holy fathers in the record of what was enacted [at Ephesus], to ensure that readers might know how to interpret properly the holy fathers' statement, the pure creed of orthodox faith'.[196] This again points to the record

[191] Cyril, *Ep.* 55.5 (*ACO* I.1.4, 50:28–31 [V.135.5]): *Ἐπειδὴ δὲ γέγραφεν ὑμῶν ἡ εὐλάβεια ὡς παροχετεύουσι τινὲς ἐφ' ἃ μὴ προσῆκεν, τὰ ἐν τῶι συμβόλωι, τῶν ἐν αὐτῶι ῥημάτων τὴν δύναμιν ἢ οὐ συνιέντες ὀρθῶς ἢ καὶ ἐκ τοῦ προσκεκλίσθαι ταῖς τινων συγγραφαῖς εἰς ἀδόκιμον ἀποφερόμενοι νοῦν, εἶτα χρῆναι κἀμὲ τοὺς περὶ τούτων αὐτῶν πρὸς ὑμᾶς ποιήσασθαι λόγους*, cf. Cyril, *Ep.* 71 (*ACO* I.4, 211:14–17 [CC.288]).

[192] A point made explicitly at the letter's end: Cyril, *Ep.* 55.31 (*ACO* I.1.4, 61:1 [V.135.31]).

[193] Cyril, *Ep.* 55.5 (*ACO* I.1.4, 50:34–51:1 [V.135.5]): *ἤδη μὲν γὰρ καὶ ἡ ἁγία σύνοδος, ἡ κατά γε φημὶ τὴν Ἐφεσίων συνειλεγμένη κατὰ βούλησιν θεοῦ, τῆς Νεστορίου κακοδοξίας ὁσίαν καὶ ἀκριβῆ κατενεγκοῦσα τὴν ψῆφον* [. . .]

[194] Cyril, *Ep.* 55.5 (*ACO* I.1.4, 51:1–7 [V.135.5]), continuing from the previous quotation: *καὶ τὰς τῶν ἑτέρων κενοφωνίας, οἵπερ ἂν ἢ γένοιντο μετ' αὐτὸν ἢ καὶ πρὸ αὐτοῦ γεγόνασιν, τὰ ἴσα φρονοῦντες αὐτῶι καὶ εἰπεῖν ἢ συγγράψαι τολμήσαντες, συγκατέκρινεν ἐκείνωι, τὴν ἴσην αὐτοῖς ἐπιθεῖσα δίκην. καὶ γὰρ ἦν ἀκόλουθον, ἑνὸς ἅπαξ ἐπὶ ταῖς οὕτω βεβήλοις κενοφωνίαις κατεγνωσμένου, μὴ καθ' ἑνὸς μᾶλλον ἐλθεῖν, ἀλλ', ἵν' οὕτως εἴπω, κατὰ πάσης αὐτῶν τῆς αἱρέσεως ἤτοι τῆς συκοφαντίας, ἧς πεποίηνται κατὰ τῶν εὐσεβῶν τῆς ἐκκλησίας δογμάτων, δύο πρεσβεύοντες υἱοὺς* [. . .].

[195] Cf. Cyril, *Ep.* 71 (*ACO* I.4, 211:12–14 [CC.288]), where Cyril construed Ephesus as having condemned the teaching of Diodore and Theodore in advance, via Nestorius' condemnation.

[196] Cyril, *Ep.* 55.6 (*ACO* I.1.4, 51:9–13 [V.135.6]): *ὑπὲρ δὲ τοῦ μὴ ἀγνοεῖσθαι παρά τισι τοῦ συμβόλου τὴν δύναμιν, ὃ καὶ ἐν ἁπάσαις ταῖς ἁγίαις τοῦ θεοῦ ἐκκλησίαις καὶ κρατεῖ καὶ κεκήρυκται, πατέρων ἁγίων δόξας ἢ γοῦν ἐκθέσεις ἐνέταξα τοῖς αὐτόθι πεπραγμένοις*

of 22 July, in which the patristic citations had been shifted to a more prominent position, immediately following the Creed, and had been glossed in precisely these terms. Cyril's remark again suggests the (at least partially) artificial nature of the written proceedings, as in his previous *Ep.* 33. Cyril is hammering home his argument that only by reading the Creed in the textual context provided by the *acta* can it be properly understood—this conciliar documentation is thus the primary means to 'remove ignorance on anybody's part as to the significance of the Creed'.[197] By reasserting the link between the recognition of Ephesus I, and the acceptance of a specific reading of the Nicene Creed, Cyril sought to undermine the Antiochene attempt to 'misread' both the Creed, and the Ephesine council. *On the Holy Creed*, then, was not intended to stand alone, but to be read as a commentary upon Cyril's *acta*, in which the fuller and authoritative account of the Nicene faith could be found.

Only then does Cyril cite the text of the Creed, so that it is read in the light of the foregoing construal.[198] As in the *acta*, it is quoted in its 'pure' Cyrilline form, further emphasizing Cyril's claim to be the guardian of the uncorrupted Nicene tradition. After this, Cyril provides an exposition of his own Christology, arranged according to the clauses of the Creed—in this way, his own doctrinal emphases are presented as proceeding from an orthodox reading of the credal text, and so as synonymous with the Nicene faith itself.[199] The elision of Cyril's own doctrine with that of the fathers of Nicaea inevitably leads to some ambitious exegesis—Cyril claims, for instance, that the Creed affirms Christ's possession of a rational soul, and the consubstantiality of the Holy Spirit.[200] In a concluding rhetorical flourish, Cyril names Nestorius and Theodore as the twin originators of the heretical misinterpretation of the Creed.

On the Holy Creed, in short, represented a final attempt by Cyril to defend and consolidate his own idea of Nicaea, as expressed in his *acta*, as the only legitimate reading of the Creed. By construing the conciliar achievement of Nicaea–Ephesus as a harmonious whole, Cyril could place himself within that august company of Spirit-guided expositors of the Nicene faith. Moreover, by focusing on the 22 July session as the primary expression of his council's work, Cyril could argue that the reception of Ephesus I (and so the faith of Nicaea) required the condemnation not only of Nestorius' doctrine, but of Theodore's as well.[201]

ὑπομνήμασιν, ἵν' εἰδεῖεν οἱ ἐντυγχάνοντες αὐταῖς τίνα προσήκει νοεῖσθαι τρόπον τῶν ἁγίων πατέρων τὴν ἔκθεσιν ἤτοι τὸ ἀκραιφνὲς τῆς ὀρθῆς πίστεως σύμβολον.

[197] Cyril, *Ep.* 55.6 (*ACO* I.1.4, 51:9–10 [V.135.6]): *ὑπὲρ δὲ τοῦ μὴ ἀγνοεῖσθαι παρά τισι τοῦ συμβόλου τὴν δύναμιν, ὃ καὶ ἐν ἁπάσαις ταῖς ἁγίαις τοῦ θεοῦ ἐκκλησίαις* [. . .].

[198] Cyril, *Ep.* 55.7 (*ACO* I.1.4, 51:19–29 [V.135.7]), cf. Dossetti, *Simbolo,* 70.

[199] Cyril, *Ep.* 55.13 (*ACO* I.1.4, 53:30ff [V.135.13]).

[200] Cyril, *Ep.* 55.14 (*ACO* I.1.4, 54:17f [V.135.14]), 55.30 (60.21f [V.135.30]).

[201] The East's utter refusal to anathematize Theodore ultimately forced Cyril to back down on this final point—he thus later claimed that Ephesus had never intended to condemn Theodore by name (cf. *Epp.* 72 and 91).

John of Antioch had sought to preserve his own distinct 'reading' of Nicaea not by opposing Cyril's construal of 'Nicaea and Ephesus' but by adopting and then reinterpreting it, and so drawing its sting. There also developed, however, an alternative Antiochene response—one that espoused not the qualified acceptance of Cyril's council, but rather its outright rejection. Accounts of this period have been overly influenced by a teleological narrative that prioritizes the contribution of the victors at Chalcedon, regarding those who staunchly resisted the 433 settlement as an eccentric minority of pro-Nestorius 'irreconcilables', whose cause embodied both a political and a doctrinal dead end.[202] However, this hard-line Antiochene grouping in fact articulated a nuanced and creative 'minority report' on the Nicene faith that persisted throughout the 430s and 440s. They expanded upon the earlier insights of Nestorius regarding the proper reading of the Nicene Creed, while also commending a narrative of orthodoxy that identified Cyril's council not with the confirmation of Nicaea but with its betrayal, thus locating the authentic Nicene faith not among the conciliar many but among the persecuted few. We now turn to examine this 'minority report', in the writings of Theodoret, Irenaeus, Eutherius, and Nestorius.

As argued above, the Easterners' idea of 'Nicaea', as developed and refined during the summer of 431, did not perish with the imperial order of dissolution. Moreover, it has been contended that even the Peace of 433 did not commit the East to recognizing Cyril's council as legitimate, or his writings as authoritative—and that the Formula was effectively 'spun' precisely to undermine Cyril's construal of the Nicene faith. The polemic of the *conciliabulum* could in large part remain untouched: Cyril's interpretation of Nicaea was heretical, he had corrupted the Nicene Creed through the addition of his *Anathemas*, and his council had subverted the Nicene faith. Indeed, almost two decades later, on the eve of Ephesus II, Theodoret reminded John's successor Domnus that the full documentary *acta* of the *conciliabulum* remained in the archives, as an abiding testament to the Easterners' position:

> Though a larger number have rashly confirmed them [the *Anathemas*], I resisted at Ephesus, and refused to communicate with the writer of them until he had agreed to the points laid down by me, and had harmonized his teaching with them, without making any mention of the Chapters. This your holiness can ascertain without any difficulty if you order the acts of the synod to be investigated; for they are preserved as is customary with the synodical signatures, and there are extant more than fifty synodic acts showing the accusation of the Twelve Chapters.[203]

[202] For instance: Kidd, *History*, III, 254–76.

[203] Theodoret, *Ep.* 112 (*SC* 111, 50:7–16): *Καὶ γὰρ ἤδη καὶ πλειόνων ὡς ἔτυχε ταῦτα βεβαιωσάντων, ἀντέστημεν ἐν Ἐφέσῳ, καὶ οὐ πρότερον ἐκοινωνήσαμεν τῷ ταῦτα γεγραφότι, ἕως τοῖς παρ' ἡμῶν ἐκτεθεῖσι συνθέμενος, σύμφωνον αὐτοῖς διδασκαλίαν προσήρμοσεν, οὐδεμίαν τῶν κεφαλαίων*

Unlike John's synodical letter of 437, Theodoret made no attempt to cover up the episcopal divisions at Ephesus, but rather reiterated the earlier stance of the *conciliabulum*, and appealed to the *acta* of that synod (complete with episcopal signatures) to corroborate his testimony. After referring to the 'more than fifty synodic acts', Theodoret mentioned a host of documents in quick succession—including pre-conciliar letters (e.g. John's 430 letter to Eutherius, Firmus, and Theodotus), conciliar sessions (e.g. the deposition of Cyril and Memnon), synodical letters (e.g. those sent to the emperor, and to the clergy and laity of Constantinople), documents from the Chalcedonian colloquia, and post-conciliar letters relating to the peace negotiations.[204] The Easterners' *acta*, it would appear, thus comprised an anthology of carefully selected material. Theodoret went on to construe the Peace of 433 as involving Cyril retracting his *Anathemas* and repenting of his errors,[205] and even drew an explicit parallel with Nicaea: the Formula, like the Nicene Creed, was signed by orthodox (i.e. Antiochenes) and Arians (i.e. Cyrillians) alike![206]

Theodoret's construal of Nicaea and Ephesus in this late letter (449) can also be found in writings he composed in the aftermath of 431. His substantial (and now lost) *Pentalogos* was devoted to denouncing the Cyrilline council,[207] and he remained emphatically committed to the *conciliabulum* as the true council of Ephesus.[208] He composed a long letter to the people of Constantinople (*c.*432), in which he emphasized that the Nicene Creed must remain the true basis for orthodox doctrine, and quoted it at length.[209] Here Theodoret also developed a fresh way to 'read' the Creed against Cyril, by appealing to the condemnation of divine mutability in the Nicene anathemas. Since, Theodoret argued, Cyril affirmed a theopaschite theology of a suffering Word, he fell directly under the Nicene anathemas, as a reviver of Arian doctrine.[210]

ἐκείνων ποιησάμενος μνήμην. Καὶ τοῦτο ῥᾴδιον γνῶναι τὴν σὴν ὁσιότητα, κελεύσασαν ζητηθῆναι τὰ πεπραγμένα. Ἀπόκειται γὰρ πάντως, κατὰ τὸ παρακολουθῆσαν ἔθος, τῆς συνόδου τὰς ὑπογραφὰς ἔχοντα. Ἔστι δὲ πλείονα ἢ πεντήκοντα συνοδικά, τὴν κατηγορίαν τῶν δώδεκα κεφαλαίων δεικνύντα.

[204] Theodoret, *Ep.* 112 (*SC* 111, 50:16–54:1). The considerable overlap with the documents preserved in Irenaeus' *Tragoedia* may suggest that these *acta* formed the basis for Irenaeus' great work.

[205] Theodoret, *Ep.* 112 (*SC* 111, 54:2–4); cf. the same construal in Ibas' *Letter to Mari* (*ACO* II.1.3, 32–4).

[206] Theodoret, *Ep.* 112 (*SC* 111, 48:6–20); cf. Theod., *H.E.* I.7.1, where Theodoret similarly claimed that some of the signatories of the Nicene Creed were Arian heretics who signed insincerely.

[207] Fragments remain: *ACO* I.5, 165–9; cf. P. B. Clayton (2007), *The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus: Antiochene Christology from the Council of Ephesus (431) to the Council of Chalcedon (451)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 157–8.

[208] Theodoret wrote to reassure the firebrand Alexander of Hierapolis that he had no intention of renouncing the solemn pledges the Easterners had made at Tarsus, Caesarea, and Antioch: *ACO* I.4, 104 (CC.155).

[209] *ACO* I.4, 81:30ff. (CC.129.6).

[210] *ACO* I.4, 81:35–6 (CC.129.6).

Theodoret was rather deft here, since he pursued his case by affirming precisely the *oneness* of Christ (the '*one* Lord Jesus Christ') that Cyril had exploited against the Antiochenes, but using it to draw attention to the oneness of divinity (*ὁμοούσιος*) between Father and Son, and thus the impossibility of the Son's mutability. In this way, a potential weakness in the Easterners' exegesis of the Creed was turned into a strength, and Cyril was portrayed as already condemned by the Nicene fathers. In a letter to the monks of Syria (also *c.*432) Theodoret likewise emphasized his own fidelity to Nicaea,[211] and depicted the great council as fundamentally *Antiochene* in character, not least since it had (he claimed) been presided over by Eustathius of Antioch.[212]

Theodoret's interpretation of the Peace of 433 further demonstrates the continuing viability of this 'hard-line' Antiochene trajectory. He had 'received' the Formula in an entirely benign manner, as condemning only those teachings of Nestorius at variance with apostolic doctrine—which, for Theodoret, was precisely none![213] He had similarly argued that Proclus' *Epistula synodica* (the first attempt by the new bishop of Constantinople to enforce the Peace of 433) did not commit anyone to 'adherence to the evil deeds committed at Ephesus'.[214] In short, the Formula did not prevent men such as Theodoret from rejecting Cyril's council, and the idea of 'Nicaea' that it embodied.

Theodoret's writings, however, alert us not only to the persistence of an anti-Cyrilline construal of the Nicene faith, but also to some of the difficulties inherent in that approach. With Nicaea itself as the only legitimate touchstone of orthodoxy, and the events of Ephesus 431 and its aftermath depicted in terms of division and discord, Theodoret did not have a positive or constructive interpretation of recent history to offer: 'as I look back on what happened then, and look forward to similar events in the future, my wretched spirit sighs and wails, for I see no prospect of good'.[215] Like Irenaeus, Nestorius, and Eutherius (who all gave the title '*Tragoedia*' to their accounts of the 430s), Theodoret could not provide a narrative of the triumphant conciliar confirmation of Nicaea, but only a sad account of episcopal conflict, shattered hopes, and gradual political marginalization.[216] In particular, the split from John of

[211] Theodoret, *Ep.* 151 (*PG* 83, 1437A; cf. *SC* 429, 69ff., where the letter is given only in part).
[212] Theodoret, *Ep.* 151 (*PG* 83, 1440A), cf. Theodoret, *H.E.* I.6, where Eustathius presides, sitting at Constantine's right hand—a significant departure from Soc., *H.E.* I.19.
[213] *ACO* I.4, 173:2–4 (CC.236).
[214] *ACO* I.4, 172:19–22 (CC.236): continebat enim ut intenderemus in illam synodicam et quaereremus si superfluum nil haberet et rectae fidei consonaret nullumque haberet assensum ad ea quae Ephesi male sunt gesta, et susciperentur pro ecclesiae pace; alioquin omnimode fugiantur atque refutentur; cf. *ACO* I.4, 173–4 (CC.238).
[215] Theodoret, *Ep.* 112 (*SC* 111, 48:21–2): *Εἰς ἐκεῖνα ἀφορῶσα καὶ τὰ ὅμοια προορῶσα ἡ ἀθλία ψυχή μου στένει καὶ ὀδύρεται, οὐδὲν καραδοκοῦσα χρηστόν.*
[216] Tellingly, Theodoret ended his *Church History*, composed in the late 440s, with the events of the mid 420s.

Antioch after 433 (seen as a traitor to the cause for reconciling with Cyril) rendered problematic any narrative which sought to associate Nicene orthodoxy with John's *conciliabulum*. By the 440s, Theodoret also faced an uphill struggle against the growing respect being paid to the memory of Cyril: 'the men of the other dioceses do not know the poison which lies in the Twelve Chapters; having regard to the celebrity of the writer of them, they suspect no mischief'.[217] Furthermore, Theodoret's letter of 449 suggests that the *acta* of the *conciliabulum* were not well known—even Domnus was seemingly not aware of them.

We discover the same tensions recurring in Irenaeus' *Tragoedia*. A close friend of Nestorius, Irenaeus had been present at Ephesus, and had played a key role in communicating the Easterners' position to the emperor during the summer of 431.[218] Banished to Petra in 435/6, he composed his *Tragoedia*, which survives only in an incomplete form via Rusticus' mid-sixth century Latin translation (the *Synodicon*).[219] The original shape and character of the *Tragoedia* thus remain somewhat conjectural, but it evidently represented an ambitious attempt to provide an anti-Cyrilline counter-narrative of the events of 431–3, grounded, like Cyril's own conciliar proceedings, in the citation of key documents. Irenaeus' account, however, abandoned any attempt to provide a positive account of the triumph of true Nicene (i.e. Nestorian) orthodoxy, and instead presented these years as a 'tragedy'. The *Tragoedia* opens amid dissent (the pro-Nestorius bishops' protest at the early convening of the council), traces the story through the violent quarrels that erupted within the Antiochene ranks during the peace negotiations, and ends with the exile of Nestorius' closest allies. The inclusion of so much documentary material was thus intended to give a 'warts and all' picture of events, rather than carefully airbrushed propaganda. Similarly, the idea of 'Nicaea' communicated is inevitably (indeed intentionally) pluriform—as something construed differently, and argued over, by John, Theodoret, Alexander of Hierapolis, and others. The *Tragoedia* thus represented an exhausted acknowledgement that the controversies of 431–5 had failed decisively to clarify the true character of Nicene orthodoxy.

Eutherius of Tyana's writings provide a further window onto this 'hard-line' Antiochene trajectory. Eutherius was another devoted ally of Nestorius, who had taken part in John's *conciliabulum* during the summer of 431.[220] Appalled

[217] Theodoret, *Ep.* 112 (*SC* 111, 48:22–5): *Οὐδὲ γὰρ ἴσασιν οἱ ἐκ τῶν ἄλλων διοικήσεων τὸν ἐγκείμενον τοῖς δώδεκα κεφαλαίοις ἰόν· ἀλλὰ τῇ περιφανείᾳ τοῦ ταῦτα γεγραφότος προσέχοντες, οὐδὲν ὑποπτεύουσι φλαῦρον.*

[218] Cf. *ACO* I.1.1, 93, 121; *ACO* I.1.3, 12, 46; *ACO* I.1.4, 129, 131, 133, 135; *ACO* I.1.5, 135–6.

[219] *ACO* I.4, 25–225 (CC.81–294); the work is little-studied, save for a brief analysis in F. Millar (2006), *A Greek Roman Empire: Power and Belief under Theodosius II (408–450)* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press), 168–91.

[220] See, for instance, *ACO* I.4, 28 (CC.82); *ACO* I.1.5, 14 (V.146), 123 (V.151).

by the peace forged between John and Cyril in 433, Eutherius was banished to Scythopolis, where he languished until John's successor Domnus allowed him to see out his last days in Tyre.[221] During 432–4, Eutherius composed a number of letters (extant in Latin), as well as the more substantial *Antilogia* (extant in Greek), which attacked Cyril's Christology and defended Nestorius' doctrine.

Three major contributions of Eutherius to the 'hard-line' Antiochene idea of 'Nicaea' can be identified.

Firstly, Eutherius reasserted Nestorius' central contention that the basic weakness of Cyril's theology was a failure to read the Nicene Creed correctly. Eutherius argued that the 'great and holy assembly' at Nicaea had very deliberately placed the name of 'Jesus Christ' immediately following the confession of God the Father, and had only then gone on to give an account of Jesus' divinity and humanity. In this way, Eutherius argued, the Nicene fathers taught that 'only that name [Jesus Christ] can receive in a proper and adapted manner the one [divinity] and the other [humanity]'.[222] As with Nestorius' credal exegesis, Eutherius' method was based upon a precise verbal and grammatical analysis—like Scripture itself, every Spirit-inspired word of the Creed was endowed with profound significance. Cyril's failure to understand the crucial placement of 'Jesus Christ' as the dual subject of the divine and human credal affirmations, then, led inexorably to a blasphemous theopaschitism.[223] However, it was not only Cyril that had betrayed Nicaea, but John too—for (via the Formula) he was guilty of adding to the Nicene faith a word ('Theotokos') that the fathers of Nicaea never used.[224] Nestorius, conversely, was depicted as faithfully following the fathers of Nicaea, and Eutherius even quotes from Nestorius' own writings on the Creed to illustrate this point.[225]

Secondly, Eutherius provided a narrative of 431 that continued to regard Cyril's council as erroneous, illegitimate, and opposed to the Nicene faith.[226] The council at Ephesus, Eutherius claimed, had originally been convened to

[221] *ACO* I.4, 203–4 (CC.279); cf. the now rather dated monograph: G. Ficker (1908), *Eutherius von Tyana: Ein beitrag zur Geschichte des ephesinischen Konsils vom Jahre 431* (Leipzig: J.A. Barth).

[222] Eutherius, *Antilogia* XI (*SC* 557, 158:76–87): *Τὸ αἷμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ. πῶς τοσοῦτον νέφος μαρτύρων παρατρέχουσι καὶ τὴν ἰδίαν αὐθεντίαν τῆς τοῦ πνεύματος νομοθεσίας ἔμπροσθεν ἄγουσι κατατολμῶντες τῆς βοώσης ἐντολῆς· Μὴ μέταιρε ὅρια αἰώνια ἃ ἔθεντο οἱ πατέρες σου, μὴ προσέχοντες ὅτι καὶ τῶν κατὰ Νίκαιαν ἁγίων πατέρων ὁ ἱερὸς καὶ μέγας χορὸς μετὰ τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ πατρὸς ὁμολογίαν εὐθὺς ἔταξε τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ δεσπότου Χριστοῦ· Καὶ εἰς ἕνα κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν, εἰθ' οὕτως ἐπήγαγον τά τε ὑψηλὰ τῆς θεότητος τά τε οἰκονομικὰ τῆς αὐτοῦ ἀνθρωπότητος ὡς τούτου μόνου τοῦ ὀνόματος οἰκείως καὶ προσφόρως τὰ διάφορα δεχομένου κατὰ τὴν τοῦ μακαρίου Παύλου φωνήν*, cf. *Ep.* 5.17 (*SC* 557, 320:6–18).

[223] Eutherius, *Antilogia* XI (*SC* 557, 160:89 ff.).

[224] Eutherius, *Ep.* 5.9 (*SC* 557, 307:14–21).

[225] Eutherius, *Ep.* 5.7 (*SC* 557, 302:5–9), cf. Loofs, *Nestoriana*, 378:6–10.

[226] Cf. Eutherius, *Ep.* 5.5 (*SC* 557, 300:5–7).

discuss Cyril's *Anathemas*,[227] but Cyril, gathering the bishops early to avoid such an examination, had condemned Nestorius with great cruelty and injustice.[228] John then convened a council, which rightly deposed Cyril and Memnon as heretics and violators of ecclesiastical law.[229] The emperor intervened against Cyril's council, declaring its actions null and void, but Cyril's men persisted in their violence and bribery.[230] The Easterners, by contrast, were calm and reasonable, continuing to request that Cyril's writings be fully investigated.[231] Cyril's council, in short, departed from the teaching of the Nicene fathers, and persecuted the one (Nestorius) who was loyal to it.[232]

Like Nestorius (see below), Eutherius articulated his position predominantly through reference to Cyril's conciliar documentation—an implicit recognition of the success of Cyril's efforts at textual circulation, and that it was the Cyrilline record that had established itself as the primary means by which the events of Ephesus were approached.[233] Eutherius' strategy was thus to use Cyril's *acta* precisely to undermine Cyril's portrayal of events, and so to expose Cyril's documentary record as the deceitful product of a tyrannous assembly. Eutherius poured scorn upon Cyril's 'so-called Acts', in which the faithful Nestorius was 'reproached with irreproachable affirmations', and argued that the proceedings revealed the Cyrilline party's own 'uncertain and discordant affirmations'.[234] Eutherius likewise exploited Cyril's citations from Nestorius in the *acta*, in order to demonstrate Nestorius' orthodoxy—Eutherius explained that the extracts showed Nestorius' careful distinction of the divine and human in Christ, in contrast to Cyril's scandalous theopaschitism.[235] Similarly, Cyril's claim that Nestorius had equated Christ to Saul, David, or Cyrus (i.e. a mere Spirit-led man) is revealed as false by appealing to the quotation from Nestorius that Cyril had included precisely to demonstrate the charge![236] John is also attacked via the documentary record, as Eutherius damningly compares John's repeated denunciation of the *Anathemas* in 431

[227] Eutherius, *Ep.* 4.3 (*SC* 557, 274:1–2).

[228] Eutherius, *Ep.* 4.3 (*SC* 557, 276:19–26). Eutherius' focus is on 22 June: he shows no knowledge of 22 July.

[229] Eutherius, *Ep.* 4.4 (*SC* 557, 276:1–10).

[230] Eutherius, *Ep.* 4.4 (*SC* 557, 276:10–278:23).

[231] Eutherius, *Ep.* 4.5 (*SC* 557, 278:11–280:12).

[232] Eutherius, *Ep.* 4.5 (*SC* 557, 280:13–23).

[233] Cyril's documentary approach seems to have shaped the character of the ensuing polemical exchange more broadly. For instance, in his *Ep.* 5, Eutherius playfully subverts the record of 22 June by pairing off extracts from the Formula (attributed to Cyril) with extracts from Nestorius' writings, to show how much they agree!

[234] Eutherius, *Ep.* 4.5 (*SC* 557, 280:25–8): Talem namque et eorum quae dicuntur Gestorum fecerunt actionem, ut inconsona et incerta adversus illum virum proferrent et plerumque inreprehensibilia reprehenderent; cf. Eutherius' sarcastic reference to the 'admirable Acts': *Ep.* 1.5 (*SC* 557, 259:11–260:29).

[235] Eutherius, *Ep.* 4.5 (*SC* 557, 280:27–282:35).

[236] Eutherius, *Ep.* 4.5 (*SC* 557, 282:30–5); cf. *ACO* I.1.2, 47 (V.60.6).

with his decision to reconcile with their author in 433.[237] Again, we glimpse a tension that dogged the hardliners' construal: John (the 'traitor') was now seen as just as unorthodox as Cyril (the 'heretic'), and so privileging John's *conciliabulum* as the authentic holy council of Ephesus was deeply problematic.

Thirdly, Eutherius further developed an alternative idea of 'Nicaea', in which the Nicene faith was preserved and passed on not via the great conciliar consensus of Ephesus I, but rather via a persecuted minority who stood, like St Stephen, alone against the foes. It is this theme, indeed, with which Eutherius opens his *Antilogia*—the first chapter is directed against 'those who judge truth only after the greatest number'.[238] Eutherius reminds his readers that the majority are not always right, and gives a host of biblical examples to prove his point. The mere fact of an assembled episcopal multitude at Cyril's council was thus no guarantee that the Nicene faith had been authentically confirmed. One virtue of Eutherius' non-conciliar narrative was that it could draw on an impeccable 'Nicene' trope—that of Athanasius, the great defender of Nicaea, *contra mundum*. The resources of the Nicene tradition, in other words, were flexible enough to support the self-presentations of both the Cyrilline conciliar majority and the anti-Cyrilline faithful remnant. That very discursive flexibility, of course, also acted to inhibit the development of a stable consensus over the idea of 'Nicaea'. Eutherius' attempt to identify the authentic Nicene faith with a repudiation of Ephesus I was thus eminently defensible—the problem was that his narrative of 'tragedy' was unlikely ever to be attractive to more than a handful of like-minded fellow sufferers.[239]

We turn, finally, to Nestorius himself, who in the years after Ephesus made an ambitious attempt to articulate an idea of 'Nicaea' that repudiated the activity of Cyril's council. Nestorius' departure from Constantinople by no means saw him lay down his pen—as noted above, the imperial law condemning Nestorius and his doctrine (435/6) explicitly prohibited anyone from reading or copying the book he had written against the council of Ephesus.[240] This work is most likely to be identified with Nestorius' *Tragoedia*, which, although lost in its original form, has been largely preserved as the second section of his later *Liber Heraclidis*.[241] As Scipioni has convincingly demonstrated, Nestorius reworked the *Tragoedia* in the context of the controversy of 448–50, adding to it a version of his earlier *Theopaschites* as a doctrinal introduction, and an account of the events of Constantinople 448 and Ephesus

[237] Eutherius, *Ep.* 4.6 (*SC* 557, 282:13–284:39).

[238] Eutherius, *Antilogia* I (*SC* 557, 86:1–2): *Πρὸς τοὺς πλήθει μόνῳ κρίνοντας τὴν ἀλήθειαν.*

[239] Eutherius gives to his *Antilogia* the subtitle 'Tragedy' (*SC* 557, 76:1–2); cf. *Ep.* 4.7 (*SC* 557, 286:4).

[240] *ACO* I.1.3, 68:18–20 (V.111). The death of Maximian in 434 even provoked rumours of a movement to restore Nestorius to his see: *ACO* I.4, 173–4 (CC.238).

[241] The *Liber* is extant only in Syriac—in what follows, we provide references to the Syriac text (ed. Bedjan), but give the English translation (ed. Hodgson/Driver).

449 as a conclusion.[242] We now examine, therefore, this earlier material preserved in the *Liber*, as evidence of Nestorius' vigorous and creative construal of an alternative idea of 'Nicaea'.

Nestorius' two consistent emphases are that his doctrine (and not that of Cyril) represents the faithful exposition of the Nicene Creed, and that Cyril's Ephesine council did not confirm, but in fact betrayed, the Nicene faith. Like Eutherius and Irenaeus, however, Nestorius does not simply replace Cyril's council with John's council as the authentic locus of the Nicene faith—indeed, his treatment of the *conciliabulum* is distinctly half-hearted.[243] Rather than associating the faithful interpretation of Nicaea with the pronoucements of a particular conciliar assembly, Nestorius simply assumes that any wise reader of the Creed will agree with his own interpretation of it. True fidelity to Nicaea is thus located not in a public gathering of bishops, but in the mind of Nestorius himself—he expects his idea of 'Nicaea' to be vindicated by sheer intellectual merit, rather than on the basis of conciliar affirmation.[244] Nestorius carves out a polemical position, in other words, that is self-consciously that of the righteous minority, the noble Athanasius persecuted by the Arians on account of his faithfulness to Nicaea.[245] Nonetheless, Nestorius still repeatedly attacks Cyril's own idea of 'Nicaea', and does so, like Eutherius, through recourse to Cyril's own *acta*.[246]

Nestorius devotes considerable space, then, to defending his particular reading of the Creed. The second part of Book I of the *Liber* opens with Nestorius' interlocutor Sophronius drawing attention to the centrality of this issue: 'many accept the faith of the 318 laid down at Nicaea—those who believe in various ways, who understand the Scriptures in various ways (especially "He was made flesh and was made man"), so let us know your opinions, and how you are right and your enemies wrong'.[247] Nestorius' ingenious strategy in the *Liber* is to exploit Cyril's own use of the Creed in

[242] L.I. Scipioni (1956), *Ricerche sulla cristologia del 'Libro di Eraclide' di Nestorius: La formulazione teologica e il su contesto filosofico* (Freiburg: Edizioni Universitarie). Scipioni's thesis can be further supported by the many similarities between the central section of the *Liber* and the works of Eutherius and Irenaeus from the 430s.

[243] For Nestorius, an authentic council never met at Ephesus, since neither of the two part-councils involved all the bishops: Nestorius, *Liber* (Bedjan, 191–3 [Hodgson/Driver, 129]; cf. 198 [Hodgson/Driver, 134], 390–1 [Hodgson/Driver, 283]). This perhaps partly helps to explain Nestorius' non-participation in the Easterners' council during the summer of 431.

[244] As Nestorius scornfully asks, 'does the number establish the truth of the orthodox and a true council?': Nestorius, *Liber* (Bedjan, 190; Hodgson/Driver, 127).

[245] Nestorius, *Liber* (Bedjan, 280–1; Hodgson/Driver, 200).

[246] Nestorius' target audience appears to be those in the middle ground who had (mistakenly) accepted Cyril's version of events via his *acta*: Nestorius, *Liber* (Bedjan, 365–6; Hodgson/Driver, 265).

[247] Nestorius, *Liber* (Bedjan, 126; Hodgson/Driver, 87).

his Ephesine *acta*.[248] Thus, at great length, Nestorius carefully retraces the official record of the 22 June session, challenging Cyril's errors and misleading statements, and, on arriving at the point where the Nicene Creed and the two letters were read, gives a thorough account of the authentic interpretation of the Creed.[249] Cyril's reading strategy is here exposed as inattentive, even impious—Cyril had failed to attend closely to the Spirit-inspired ordering of the credal words, thinking that the fathers of Nicaea had 'made use of these terms fortuitously and without distinction' rather than according to the 'divine purpose'.[250] It is thus Cyril who 'reduces and takes away from the deposit which has been laid down by the fathers', for he 'made no mention of the beginning' of the Creed.[251] As in his earlier polemic, Nestorius claims that Cyril had avoided the Creed's foundational terminology, for the fathers of Nicaea 'first laid down the names which are common to the divinity and the humanity, and then built thereon the tradition of the incarnation, the sufferings, and the resurrection'.[252] To begin where the fathers begin is thus to confess the *πρόσωπον* of union (the 'Lord Jesus Christ'), rather than perversely to misread the Creed out of a vain 'wish that in the two natures God the Logos should be the *πρόσωπον* of union'.[253] Nestorius cleverly subverts Cyril's own rhetoric here—it is Cyril who seeks to 'correct the fathers', and so it is he who falls under their anathematization of those who add or subtract.[254]

Nestorius substantiates his case by quoting Cyril's own *Second Letter* from the 22 June proceedings, demonstrating that Cyril did indeed make the Logos, rather than Jesus Christ, the subject of the union.[255] Cyril thus fatally misread the Creed, and so confused those two natures that it had kept distinct. Indeed, by implicating the eternal Logos in a mutable birth, Cyril revived the Arian heresy condemned in the Creed's anathemas.[256] In this way, Cyril's conciliar *acta* became the great proof of his heretical error: the proceedings had been intended to convince readers that Cyril had followed the fathers of Nicaea, but

[248] We note again the complete ignorance of the 22 July proceedings among the Antiochenes, and their consistent focus on the documentary record of 22 June session as the defining event of Cyril's council.

[249] Nestorius, *Liber* (Bedjan, 209; Hodgson/Driver, 141).

[250] Nestorius, *Liber* (Bedjan, 247; Hodgson/Driver, 169).

[251] Nestorius, *Liber* (Bedjan, 209 [Hodgson/Driver, 142], cf. 221 [Hodgson/Driver, 150]).

[252] Nestorius, *Liber* (Bedjan, 209; Hodgson/Driver, 142), cf. Eutherius, *Antilogia* XI (*SC* 557, 158:76–87).

[253] Nestorius, *Liber* (Bedjan, 211 [Hodgson/Driver, 143]; cf. 214 [Hodgson/Driver, 146], 247 [Hodgson/Driver, 169], 250 [Hodgson/Driver, 171], 278–9 [Hodgson/Driver, 198]). When Nestorius quotes the Creed, he does not defer to Cyril's version of the text.

[254] Nestorius, *Liber* (Bedjan, 210 [Hodgson/Driver, 142]; cf. 218 [Hodgson/Driver, 148]). Nestorius also repeats the accusation that Cyril added to the Creed by affirming 'Theotokos' (Bedjan, 219 [Hodgson/Driver, 149], 270 [Hodgson/Driver, 185], 364–7 [Hodgson/Driver, 263–5]).

[255] Nestorius, *Liber* (Bedjan, 211; Hodgson/Driver, 143–4).

[256] Nestorius, *Liber* (Bedjan, 214–15; Hodgson/Driver, 146).

they in fact revealed the opposite. It was Cyril who 'began to lay down laws and to substitute those terms which they had not said, and to introduce them into the faith',[257] whilst Nestorius had 'kept without blemish the faith of the 318'.[258] Similarly, although the proceedings may have appeared to show that a thorough enquiry into the Nicene faith had taken place, Cyril had in fact avoided such an investigation, knowing that the heresy of his own writings was evident to all.[259] The one who stood accused assumed the position of judge, and so it was not the Nicene faith that was confirmed, but that of the Arians, Manichees, and Apollinarians instead.[260] Christ was not present in glory at Ephesus, as Cyril claimed, but was rather trampled upon.[261] The circulation of Cyril's *acta*, then, need not end the debate over Nicaea, but could finally start it—since by containing the text of the Creed and the two *Letters*, every reader could now dispassionately investigate matters for himself.[262] For Nestorius, the battle for orthodoxy was not to be won through conciliar endorsement but through detached intellectual enquiry—such political naivety perhaps helps to explain why Cyril's cause would ultimately triumph.

Nestorius is similarly inventive with other aspects of Cyril's conciliar record. The remarks of Peter the notary are used to demonstrate Cyril's tyrannical grip over the gathering.[263] The testimonies of Theodotus and Acacius are condemned as distorted.[264] Cyril's citations from the fathers are shown to support Nestorius' doctrine, and the citations from Nestorius' own writings are shown to be in harmony with the Creed.[265] The episcopal condemnations of Nestorius' *Second Letter* lack any theological engagement.[266] Everything was rushed, and the proceedings were only written up and signed after the session itself.[267] The illegitimacy of Cyril's assembly is also revealed by reference to the letters of protest issued at the time.[268] Finally, Cyril's interpretation of the Formula (in his *Letter to Acacius*) is quoted in order to show that in the end the Bishop of Alexandria affirmed Nestorius' doctrine![269]

[257] Nestorius, *Liber* (Bedjan, 216; Hodgson/Driver, 147).
[258] Nestorius, *Liber* (Bedjan, 265; Hodgson/Driver, 181).
[259] Nestorius, *Liber* (Bedjan, 224 [Hodgson/Driver, 153]; cf. 220–1 [Hodgson/Driver, 150–1], 245–6 [Hodgson/Driver, 167–8]). For Nestorius, authentic conciliar activity required thorough doctrinal examination, as had occurred at Nicaea (Bedjan, 259–60 [Hodgson/Driver, 174–5]).
[260] Nestorius, *Liber* (Bedjan, 258–60 [Hodgson/Driver, 176–8]; cf. 193 [Hodgson/Driver, 130]).
[261] Nestorius, *Liber* (Bedjan, 183–6; Hodgson/Driver, 123–5).
[262] The *acta*, Nestorius claims, were sent to 'all the world': Nestorius, *Liber* (Bedjan, 196; Hodgson/Driver, 132).
[263] Nestorius, *Liber* (Bedjan, 194–5; Hodgson/Driver, 131–2).
[264] Nestorius, *Liber* (Bedjan, 201–2; Hodgson/Driver, 136–7).
[265] Nestorius, *Liber* (Bedjan, 141 ff.; Hodgson/Driver, 188 ff.).
[266] Nestorius, *Liber* (Bedjan, 366–7; Hodgson/Driver, 265).
[267] Nestorius, *Liber* (Bedjan, 366; Hodgson/Driver, 265).
[268] Nestorius, *Liber* (Bedjan, 162–74 [Hodgson/Driver, 106–16]; cf. 196–8 [Hodgson/Driver, 133–4]).
[269] Nestorius, *Liber* (Bedjan, 404 ff.; Hodgson/Driver, 293 ff.).

In short, then, Nestorius and his allies articulated a distinctive ‘minority report’ on the Nicene faith during the 430s, differing considerably from the broader Antiochene reception of Ephesus under John. These ‘hardliners’ refined Nestorius’ earlier polemic regarding the proper exegesis of the Nicene Creed, whilst articulating a narrative of orthodoxy that identified Cyril’s council not with the confirmation of Nicaea but with its betrayal. They craftily utilized the widely circulated documentary record of Cyril’s assembly to expose its tyrannously partisan character and its failure properly to examine the Nicene faith. Although the memory of the *conciliabulum* remained strong (and its *acta* carefully preserved), John’s betrayal of the cause in 433 rendered problematic the tracing of an alternative conciliar genealogy of orthodoxy via that synod. Thus, true fidelity to Nicaea was located not among the conciliar many but among the persecuted few, who embodied a story of ‘tragedy’ rather than triumph. Nestorius presented his account as the long-awaited ‘restaging’ of the debate over Nicaea, so that, finally, the emperor’s command for a full doctrinal examination could be fulfilled and Cyril’s heresy exposed. Yet while the efforts of these men reveal that the reception of Cyril’s council was far from straightforward, and his idea of ‘Nicaea’ far from universally accepted, their campaign had come to recognize its own political marginalization: Nestorius looked for vindication, ultimately, not in a sudden turnaround of human affairs, but in the eschatological judgement of Christ.[270]

CONCLUSION

It has been contended that we discover, in the years following the conciliar fiasco of Ephesus, not the serene reception of the Cyrilline council and the particular idea of ‘Nicaea’ that it articulated, but rather a complex pluriformity of contrasting receptions, each embodying different construals of the Nicene faith. Ephesus did not, in other words, solve the central problem of the identity of ‘Nicaea’ that the Nestorian controversy had so dramatically unleashed, but rather exacerbated it: for any meaningful expression of what it meant to be faithful to ‘Nicaea’ now had to provide not only an *exegetical* account of the correct interpretation of the Creed, but also a *conciliar* account of the precise relation between Nicaea and its ‘successor’ in Ephesus. Indeed, since the nature of Nicaea’s authoritative confirmation at Ephesus could be variously construed, a range of different readings of ‘Nicaea’ could, by association with the council, be advanced not merely as superior but as alone legitimate. The idea of ‘Nicaea’ thus continued to exert a curiously double-sided influence

[270] Nestorius, *Liber* (Bedjan, 181; Hodgson/Driver, 121).

on orthodox discourse in the years after Ephesus: it was both the underlying source of the controversy but also the stimulus for creative thinking intended precisely to resolve that dispute.

We have identified several distinct trajectories to this Ephesine reception.

Firstly, a 'minimal Cyrilline' reception, which acknowledged the authority of Cyril's council and its deposition of Nestorius, is evident from, for instance, the imperial edicts of the mid 430s, and from Socrates' *Church History*. This 'minimal' reception inevitably gravitated towards the 22 June proceedings, but lacked any significant recognition of the role of Cyril's council in confirming the Nicene faith.

Secondly, a 'moderate Antiochene' reception also acknowledged the authority of Cyril's council, but tailored that acknowledgement in order to neutralize the Cyrilline idea of 'Nicaea' that lay behind it. Indeed, by accepting Ephesus I as the conciliar reaffirmation of the Nicene faith, yet construing that Nicene faith in simple and entirely anodyne terms, John of Antioch significantly blunted the council's attack on Antiochene doctrine. The prioritization of the Formula as the key interpreter of the achievement of 22 June similarly assisted in this endeavour. In this way, the reception of Ephesus I was reshaped as a shield for, rather than as a threat to, a distinctive Antiochene reading of Nicaea.

Thirdly, a 'hard-line Cyrilline' reception was developed by Cyril and his more fervent allies, which reoriented Ephesus around the 22 July session. This both represented a response to the success of Cyril's opponents in misreading the 22 June proceedings and the Formula according to their own agendas, and also embodied a fresh attempt to condemn the Antiochene tradition as contrary to Nicaea. The documentary account of the 22 July session was uniquely suited to the task, since it had affirmed the council's unswerving fidelity to Nicaea alone, had rejected the great Antiochene father Theodore's exposition of the Creed as erroneous, and, in 'Canon 7', had issued a decree that could be deployed against any construal of the faith deemed contrary (or additional) to the Nicene Creed.

Fourthly, a 'hard-line Antiochene' reception continued entirely to reject Cyril's council, and located fidelity to Nicaea among the persecuted few, not the conciliar many. Nestorius' earlier strategy for rightly interpreting the Creed was further developed, and Cyril's *acta* were shrewdly exploited precisely to undermine his account of events. The proponents of this position struggled, however, to articulate a convincing alternative narrative of the Nicene faith, and could ultimately construe the events of the 430s only in terms of lamentable tragedy.

If by the 440s, then, an increasing number were coming to accept that the faith of Nicaea had to be approached via its authoritative confirmation at Ephesus I, there remained profound differences over the precise nature of that confirmation. This diversity of 'receptions' was further encouraged by the

varied textual forms in which the decisions of Ephesus came to circulate. Cyril had made the written *acta* of his council the locus of its authority—the achievement of Ephesus I was not embodied in a new creed or statement of faith, but in the carefully constructed record of its own proceedings in confirming Nicaea. However, Cyril's own shift to favouring the 22 July proceedings (which, like the 22 June proceedings, also contained the full text of the Creed) created a significant divergence in the textual reception of Ephesus, and so in the perceived character of the council. The majority continued to 'read' Ephesus via the 22 June proceedings, and so encountered either a moderate Cyrillian affirmation of Nicaea (via the *Second Letter*), or a relatively innocuous one (via the Formula). A minority, however, now read Ephesus via the 22 July proceedings, and so encountered a stronger Cyrillian doctrine and a more strident prohibition on other interpretations of the Nicene faith. The turbulent conciliar controversies of 448–51 thus represent, in large part, the collision of these conflicting textual receptions of Ephesus, and of the different ideas of 'Nicaea' that they each embodied.

5

The Idea of Nicaea at the Constantinopolitan Home Synod (448)

THE RENEWAL OF CONTROVERSY OVER NICAEA

The months before the fateful 'Home Synod' (*σύνοδος ἐνδημοῦσα*) of November 448 were marked by a renewed controversy over the idea of 'Nicaea' and the precise nature of its Ephesine reception. Domnus, ably assisted by Theodoret, had been engaged in an energetic campaign to get strongly dyophysite men into strategic sees, replacing the hard-line Cyrillian Athanasius with Sabinianus at Perrhe, and installing the notorious Irenaeus at Tyre.[1] Theodoret also penned his *Eranistes* (447), a deeply provocative reassertion of Antiochene Christology in which Cyril's doctrine was repeatedly portrayed as contrary to the faith of Nicaea.[2] Moreover, Theodoret's *Church History* (also *c.*447) tellingly diverged from Socrates' and Sozomen's accounts by emphasizing that those who originally signed the Creed in 325 included many Arians who were insincere in their consent—a clear message to the successors of Cyril.[3]

Theodosius, forced to intervene against this aggressive Antiochene resurgence, issued an edict of 16 February 448, in which he reaffirmed his condemnation of Nestorianism and removed Irenaeus from Tyre.[4] Crucially, the emperor identified the underlying problem as a failure rightly to grasp the character of the Nicene faith, as confirmed by Cyril at Ephesus:

> Certain persons have composed certain doctrines and have exhibited ambiguities not accurately consonant with the orthodox faith laid down by the holy council of the holy fathers, who assembled in Nicaea and in Ephesus, and by Cyril of pious memory, who was bishop of the great city of Alexandria . . . henceforth, as we have

[1] Cf. G. A. Bevan (2011), 'Theodoret of Cyrrhus and Syrian Episcopal Elections', in J. Leemans (ed.), *Episcopal Elections in Late Antiquity* (Berlin: de Gruyter), 61–87.

[2] See, for instance, *Eran.* III, in which a Cyrilline Christology is construed as theopaschite, and so contrary to the Nicene anathema against divine mutability.

[3] Theod., *H.E.* I.7.1.

[4] *ACO* I.1.4, 66 (V.138).

> said, no one shall be permitted to say or to teach anything contrary to the faith [or 'creed'] laid down in Nicaea and in Ephesus.[5]

We detect here, then, a development in the imperial position compared to the anti-Nestorian edict of a decade before. The achievement of Ephesus is now explicitly tied to the confirmation of the Nicene faith (rather than simply involving the condemnation of Nestorius). Indeed, the respective contributions of the two councils are brought so tightly together that they are essentially elided, the (singular) faith of the (singular) synod of Nicaea and Ephesus. Theodosius had now absorbed, in other words, that distinctive dynamic bequeathed by the Cyrillian *acta*, in which the most fulsome affirmation of Nicaea's sole authority was expressed precisely through the most fulsome affirmation of the authority of Ephesus I—the greatest defenders of the unique conciliar event of 325 were also the greatest advocates of the subsequent conciliar achievement of 431. The basic cypher of orthodoxy, then, was no longer merely 'Nicaea', but 'Nicaea and Ephesus'—and, as we shall see, Eutyches and Dioscorus would soon come to employ precisely that slogan as a cover for their own particular construal of the Nicene faith.

Domnus, however, was not to be outdone, and the various articulations of his position during 448 reveal a cunning 'Nicene' strategy. Thus, the public reading of the imperial edict in Antioch in April 448 was a carefully coordinated affair: Theodosius' document was met with cries of derision by the assembled crowd ('cast out the edict!')—cries that Domnus praised as expressing a pious zeal to defend the authentic faith of the holy fathers.[6] Later, at Ephesus II, the presbyter Cyriacus (an admittedly hostile witness) claimed that the following exchange also occurred:

> When he [Cyriacus] showed him [Theodoret] a copy of the book which contained the decrees of the 318 holy fathers, and the definition of the holy fathers who on a former occasion assembled here [Ephesus], that there was nothing whatever of that kind there which they enjoined, this great and wonderful

[5] *ACO* I.1.4, 66:17–25 (V.138): *ἐπειδὴ δὲ ἦλθεν εἰς τὰς εὐσεβεῖς ἡμῶν ἀκοὰς ὥς τινες διδασκαλίας τινὰς συνέγραψαν καὶ ἐξέθεντο ἀμφιβόλους καὶ οὐκ ἀκριβῶς συμφωνούσας τῆι ἐκτεθείσηι ὀρθοδόξωι πίστει παρὰ τῆς ἁγίας συνόδου τῶν συνελθόντων ἐν Νικαίαι καὶ ἐν Ἐφέσωι ἁγίων πατέρων καὶ Κυρίλλου τοῦ τῆς εὐλαβοῦς μνήμης τοῦ γεγονότος τῆς Ἀλεξανδρέων μεγάλης πόλεως ἐπισκόπου, κελεύομεν τὰ μὲν γεγονότα τοιαῦτα συγγράμματα ἢ καὶ πρὸ τούτου ἢ καὶ νῦν ἐμπίπρασθαι καὶ τελείωι ἀφανισμῶι παραδοθῆναι, ὥστε μήτε εἰς ἀνάγνωσίν τινος ἐλθεῖν, τῶν τὰ τοιαῦτα συγγράμματα ἤτοι βιβλία ἔχειν καὶ ἀναγινώσκειν ἀνεχομένων τὴν ἐσχάτην τιμωρίαν ὑφορωμένων· τοῦ δὲ λοιποῦ μηδενὶ ἐξεῖναι παρὰ τὴν ἐκτεθεῖσαν πίστιν, καθάπερ εἰρήκαμεν, ἔν τε Νικαίαι καὶ ἐν Ἐφέσωι λέγειν τι ἢ διδάσκειν* [. . .], cf. Coleman-Norton, *RSCC*, 742; Kinzig, *Formulae*, III, 326–7.

[6] Syriac text: J. Flemming (1917), *Akten der ephesischen Synode vom Jahre 449* (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung), 119:23–39; English translation: S. G. F. Perry (ed.) (1881), *The Second Synod of Ephesus* (Dartford: Orient Press), 296–7.

> Theodoret, snatching the book out of the hand of the presbyter, bade one of his own party throw it in the fire.[7]

Whereas Cyriacus used the episode to demonstrate that in rejecting Ephesus I, Theodoret necessarily rejected Nicaea (the now-standard Cyrilline construal, as in Theodosius' edict), we can also glimpse Theodoret's own understanding of the Nicene faith.[8] For it is evident that it was the Ephesine *acta* that Theodoret here consigned to the flames (in a parody of the emperor's command to burn Nestorian works)—what Theodoret was rejecting, in other words, was the Ephesine interpretation of Nicaea. As well as reminding us that Theodoret (like several other Antiochene hardliners) continued to reject the authority and legitimacy of Ephesus I, this exchange also reveals the centrality of the textual reception of Nicaea via Cyril's conciliar documentation. The Nicene Creed was circulating bound up (both theologically and physically) with the promulgations of Ephesus, not only conditioning how one should interpret Nicaea but also encouraging the elision of the two councils as one authoritative exposition of the orthodox faith.[9] This would come to make Theodoret's anti-Ephesine position increasingly difficult to maintain—and, in the event, Theodosius swiftly ordered him confined to his see for causing trouble to the orthodox.[10]

Nonetheless, Domnus' correspondence in the months before the Home Synod reveals his attempt, following John of Antioch, to prioritize the Formula of Reunion as the primary locus of Nicaea's confirmation. It was a very shrewd manoeuvre, since, as we have seen, acknowledging the Formula entailed affirming a relatively innocuous construal of the faith of Nicaea, and meant receiving Cyril's theological legacy in its least threatening form.[11] Thus, in defending his actions to the apoplectic Dioscorus (Cyril's successor in Alexandria), Domnus was able to claim that he followed the Nicene faith

[7] Flemming, *Akten*, 117:26–30; Perry, *Ephesus*, 293.

[8] Ephesus II emphasized that Theodoret had composed works against Ephesus I (Flemming, *Akten*, 91:17–21; Perry, *Ephesus*, 218).

[9] Another example of this growing tendency towards elision is found in a statement of the faith drawn up in February 449, intended as a compromise document between Ibas and his accusers. It commits the signatories to 'embrace everything that was decreed in the metropolis of Ephesus, as stemming from a council guided by the Holy Spirit, and to consider it equal to the one convoked at Nicaea, acknowledging no difference between them' (*ACO* II.1.3, 15:16–18 [X.7]): *ἔχειν δὲ τὰ δεδογμένα ἐν τῆι Ἐφεσίων μητροπόλει ἅπαντα ὡς παρὰ συνόδου ὑπὸ ἁγίου πνεύματος κινηθείσης ἴσην τε αὐτὴν ἡγεῖσθαι τῆι ἐν Νικαίαι συγκροτηθείσηι καὶ μηδεμίαν διαφορὰν νομίζειν αὐτῆς πρὸς ταύτην.*

[10] Theodoret, *Epp.* 79, 80, 82, 85.

[11] As we have noted above, many Antiochenes continued to regard the Formula as representing Cyril's formal retraction of his *Anathemas*, and even his renunciation of his conciliar proceedings at Ephesus. As late as Lent 449 (at a doctrinal investigation in Berytus), Ibas still maintained that he had regarded Cyril as a heretic until the Peace of 433, which he construed as involving Cyril's acceptance back into orthodoxy by the Easterners' council: *ACO* II.1.3, 30:31–:36 (XI.120–33).

'glorified and eulogized by the holy fathers assembled at Ephesus', which was further expressed in

> those letters, written by Cyril of blessed memory, to John of blessed memory, who previously to me governed this church, in which he [Cyril] set forth the doctrines of religion; so ought the same persons to assent to the letter which the very blessed Athanasius wrote to the blessed Epictetus.[12]

We note here too that, in common with the Formula, Domnus prioritized Athanasius' *Ad Epictetum* as the other key written authority for interpreting the faith of Nicaea, further blunting Cyril's distinctive doctrinal presentation of the teaching of the Creed.

Domnus expanded upon this construal in his second letter to Dioscorus, explaining that Cyril had deliberately omitted any mention of the *Anathemas* in the Formula of 433, in the interests of peace.[13] He thus again encouraged Dioscorus to 'confirm the letter of the blessed Cyril [i.e. the Formula] and that of St Athanasius which he addressed to Epictetus'—for only in this way could 'the faith that was formulated by the blessed and holy fathers at Nicaea in Bithynia' be truly followed.[14] Domnus followed precisely the same strategy in commending his own orthodoxy to Flavian, in a letter of early autumn 448: 'we abide by the agreement made in the time of Cyril of blessed memory, and accept the letter written by him, as well as that written by the very blessed and sainted Athanasius to the blessed Epictetus, and before these, the exposition of the faith laid down at Nicaea in Bithynia by the holy and blessed fathers'.[15]

The Antiochene resurgence of late 447–8, in short, had effectively exploited the reception of Ephesus to shroud its dyophysite theology in impeccably Nicene dress. Building on the earlier strategy of John of Antioch, Domnus had neutralized Cyril's Ephesine legacy by 'reading' Nicaea via the Formula of Reunion, and so exposed the fatal inability of the settlement of 433 to enforce a Cyrillian Christology as alone orthodox. It was in this context, then, that Cyril's most passionate defenders (including Dioscorus) sought to impose a more full-blooded interpretation of the Nicene faith as confirmed at Ephesus, and so to finish a job that Cyril himself (in his attempts to reorient Ephesus' reception around the 22 July session) had begun but left unfinished.

[12] Flemming, *Akten*, 139:40–6; Perry, *Ephesus*, 339–40.

[13] Flemming, *Akten*, 145:22–9; Perry, *Ephesus*, 352.

[14] Flemming, *Akten*, 145:41–2; Perry, *Ephesus*, 354–5.

[15] Theodoret, *Ep.* 86 (*SC* 98, 227:10–16): *ὡς ταῖς γεγενημέναις ἐπὶ τοῦ τῆς μακαρίας μνήμης Κυρίλλου συνθήκαις ἐμμένομεν, καὶ τήν τε παρ᾽ αὐτοῦ γραφεῖσαν στέργομεν ἐπιστολήν, τήν τε τοῦ μακαριωτάτου καὶ ἐν ἁγίοις Ἀθανασίου, ἣν πρὸς τὸν μακάριον Ἐπίκτητον ἔγραψεν, ἀσπασίως δεχόμεθα· καὶ πρό γε τούτων, τὴν ἐν Νικαίᾳ τῆς Βιθυνίας ἐκτεθεῖσαν πίστιν ὑπὸ τῶν ἁγίων καὶ μακαρίων Πατέρων*. The letter is preserved in Theodoret's corpus. In a letter to Dioscorus of 448 (*Ep.* 83), Theodoret employs the same strategy of interpreting Nicaea via the Formula.

Accordingly, Dioscorus' letter to Domnus began by echoing the construal of orthodoxy articulated in the emperor's edict: all must assent not only to the 'holy and oecumenical synod that took place of old at Nicaea' but also to 'its sister and consentient' council at Ephesus.[16] Dioscorus could not dismiss the Formula entirely (since Cyril had himself affirmed it), but rather interpreted it as evidence that the East had fully subscribed to Cyril's council and its doctrine.[17] In this way, he argued, the Antiochene revival of Nestorius' heresies clearly transgressed 'the doctrines of the ancient and the modern synod',[18] and so marked a wandering-away from the 'royal road' of faithful Nicene interpretation.[19] Moreover, the Antiochene position was in 'direct antagonism to the writings of our blessed and famous father and bishop, Cyril', who

> became the teacher of the whole world, seeing that he wrote in a more catholic and enlightened manner than all the world besides [...] He gave an exact exposition, as it admitted of it, of the mystery of the incarnation of the only begotten Son of God [...] Whether a treatise be named, or a letter, or a set exposition, or an address to a community, or chapters, or anathematizations, all was exact, and accurate, neat, and what might be inferred from the divine words.[20]

Dioscorus here tried to make the affirmation of Nicaea and Ephesus entail the recognition of the entirety of Cyril's writings, so that it was only in that fuller context that Nicaea could be properly read. In extending the halo of Ephesus to cover the whole Cyrilline corpus, Dioscorus was exploiting an ambiguity we earlier noted in Cyril's *acta*—namely, that the episcopal affirmations of his *Second Letter* (in the 22 June session) in many cases allowed for every line that flowed from Cyril's pen to be treated as possessing the same special authority. Crucially, of course, this now enabled Cyril's more strongly miaphysite later writings (such as his letters to Succensus), and supremely his *Anathemas*, similarly to be granted privileged status as orthodox expositions of the Nicene faith. Dioscorus also appealed to the emperor's edict directly, claiming that Theodosius had condemned all those who 'stand in direct opposition to the decisions of the two supreme and only synods'.[21] The seemingly innocuous imperial affirmation of 'Nicaea and Ephesus', in other words, could be given a

[16] Flemming, *Akten*, 135:7–9; Perry, *Ephesus*, 329; cf. Keough's (largely political) analysis of Dioscorus' agenda: S. Keough (2010), 'Rival Standards of Faith and Contested Canons of Episcopal Authority: The Correspondence between Dioskorus and Domnus preserved in the Syriac Acts of Ephesus II (449)', *Parole de l'Orient* 35, 1–19.

[17] Flemming, *Akten*, 137:5–6; Perry, *Ephesus*, 332.

[18] Flemming, *Akten*, 137:4; Perry, *Ephesus*, 332.

[19] Flemming, *Akten*, 135:34–5; Perry, *Ephesus*, 331, a deliberate echo of Cyril's language. And again at: Flemming, *Akten*, 141:43; Perry, *Ephesus*, 346.

[20] Flemming, *Akten*, 137:14–23; Perry, *Ephesus*, 332–3.

[21] Flemming, *Akten*, 137:45–6; Perry, *Ephesus*, 335.

hard-line Cyrillian twist—and it was this that Dioscorus and Eutyches would exploit as a cover for their own agenda in the following months.

Dioscorus' second letter to Domnus pursued the same case. He emphasized that Nestorius' doctrine was irrefutably condemned at Ephesus, against those Easterners who craftily claimed that he was deposed only for refusing the three synodical summonses.[22] As in the emperor's edict, Dioscorus' emphasis on Nicaea's unique authority was achieved precisely through the elevation of the status of Ephesus I. Thus, at Ephesus, Christ Himself was present in judgement against those who would 'contemn the synod of Ephesus and separate it from the holy synod that took place on a previous occasion at Nicaea'.[23] The two synods were not to be divided, for one could not be affirmed without the other: 'the task of both these two synods was one and the same: to contend in conjunction on behalf of the glory of Christ'.[24] In this way, since Domnus did not truly affirm Ephesus, he did not truly affirm Nicaea.

To conclude, the drama that would unfold during the Constantinopolitan Home Synod of November 448 must be understood within the context of a revival of the controversy over the idea of Nicaea, and the meaning of its Ephesine reception. By appealing to the Formula as the primary locus of Nicaea's authoritative confirmation, Domnus revealed how easily the settlement of 433 could be exploited to grant impeccable Nicene credentials to the promulgation of a strongly dyophysite Christology. The threatening plausibility of this Antiochene 'trajectory of reception' of Ephesus encouraged Dioscorus to articulate as alone legitimate an alternative reading of Ephesus which extended the conciliar halo to include more of Cyril's writings (including the *Anathemas*), but which disguised its radical intent behind the simple affirmation of 'Nicaea and Ephesus' (following the recent imperial edict's slogan of orthodoxy). The growing gulf between these different construals indicates again how the conceptual plasticity of 'Nicaea' both problematized the articulation of orthodoxy and provided discursive tools for its creative re-expression.

THE CONSTANTINOPOLITAN HOME SYNOD

The proceedings of the Constantinopolitan Home Synod dramatically reveal how contrasting Nicene strategies subtly exploited the flexibility of 'Nicaea' to their own advantage. The same discursive malleability that enabled Eusebius

[22] Flemming, *Akten*, 143:3–4; Perry, *Ephesus*, 346.

[23] Flemming, *Akten*, 143:21–3; Perry, *Ephesus*, 347.

[24] Flemming, *Akten*, 143:23–4; Perry, *Ephesus*, 347. In confirming Nicaea, Ephesus 'has woven for itself an imperishable crown' (Flemming, *Akten*, 143:26–7; Perry, *Ephesus*, 348).

and Flavian to construe Eutyches as outside the bounds of the authentic Nicene faith also allowed Eutyches to depict his doctrinal stance as entirely faithful to Nicaea, and his opponents as its true transgressors. The events of November 448 also demonstrate the increasing significance of the written record of conciliar *acta* in conveying the authoritative interpretation of the Nicene faith. This 'textual turn' facilitated the development of more subtle articulations of the idea of 'Nicaea' through the selective citation and arrangement of earlier conciliar proceedings and patristic writings, but also moved the written record to the centre of the conflict. Thus Flavian was especially concerned that his synodical minutes should establish a clear conviction of Eutyches' theology as contrary to Nicaea, whilst Eutyches consistently sought to have his own written documents formally included in the proceedings, and later challenged the legitimacy of the synod by arranging an investigation into the reliability of its documentation.

The Home Synod began with Eusebius' formal accusation of Eutyches. In establishing his case, Eusebius asserted that authentic orthodoxy lay in the acknowledgement of 'the creed of the 318 holy fathers who convened at Nicaea, all the proceedings of the great and holy council in the metropolis of Ephesus, and the beliefs and definitions of the blessed Cyril then bishop of the great city of Alexandria'.[25] Eusebius thus affirmed the priority of Ephesus in authoritatively confirming the Nicene faith, while also recognizing the special role of Cyril's writings. However, this relatively innocuous construal of Nicene orthodoxy was soon revealed to have a more polemical intent, as Eusebius went on to give a narrative of Ephesus:

> [Cyril wrote to Nestorius] a letter of exhortation containing the teaching of the holy fathers who met at Nicaea and explaining how this inspired teaching is to be conceived and understood... [Cyril had the letter] read to the holy and great council, so that the council could judge whether or not it was in accord with the teaching of the holy fathers... and all the members of that great and oecumenical council declared that it was in harmony with the teaching of the holy fathers and with the divine scriptures and differed from them in no respect, and that they agreed with the teaching of this letter. I now request your sacredness to have this letter read in order to make clear to all that we think and believe in accordance with the teaching contained in this letter. There is also a second letter of Cyril of sacred memory, addressed to the holy synod in the Orient, when they came to an agreement on what they held about the incarnation of Christ our Saviour and as

[25] *ACO* II.1.1, 101:1–5 (I.225): [. . .] *τῆι πίστει τῶν ἁγίων πατέρων τῶν τριακοσίων δέκα καὶ ὀκτὼ τῶν ἐν Νικαίαι συναγηγερμένων καὶ πᾶσι τοῖς πραχθεῖσιν ἐν τῆι Ἐφεσίων μητροπόλει παρὰ τῆς ἁγίας καὶ μεγάλης συνόδου καὶ τοῖς φρονηθεῖσιν καὶ ἐκτεθεῖσιν παρὰ τοῦ μακαρίου Κυρίλλου τοῦ τῆς Ἀλεξανδρέων μεγαλοπόλεως γεγονότος ἐπισκόπου* [. . .] For the procedural context, see: E. Schwartz (1929), *Der Prozess des Eutyches* (Munich: Verlag der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften), 67–75; G. May (1989), 'Das Lehrverfahren gegen Eutyches im November des Jahres 448: Zur Vorgeschichte des Konzils von Chalkedon', *AHC* 21, 9–16.

> to what the holy churches everywhere should think and preach. I ask that these letters be read and inserted in the guarantee of the minutes, so that the doctrines of the church may be clear to all.[26]

Right at the outset, then, Eusebius established the two authoritative documents by which the Nicene faith was to be rightly understood, and against which Eutyches' orthodoxy was to be judged: Cyril's *Second Letter*, and his letter 'addressed to the holy synod in the Orient' (i.e. Cyril's *Laetentur Caeli*, containing the Formula of Reunion). Eusebius thus neatly established his own positon as faithful to Nicaea, Ephesus, and Cyril, while carefully limiting Cyril's legacy (contra Dioscorus) to his two most moderate Christological statements. Tellingly, the text of the *Second Letter* was then inserted into the Home Synod's minutes within a wider citation from the 22 June *acta*, with the full text of the Formula following directly afterwards. As well as demonstrating the centrality of the Ephesine *acta* in providing the authoritative documentary context for 'reading' the Nicene faith, we also see here a subtle attempt to nudge the Formula under Ephesus I's sacred canopy, so presenting it as the final statement of Cyril's council on the Nicene faith. The emphasis on the role of Ephesus I in granting special interpretive authority to particular letters was thus a means to counter Dioscorus' contention that *all* Cyril's letters possessed an exalted status. We note the growing tension, then, between a primarily 'conciliar' account of Nicene orthodoxy (in which the Spirit-inspired assembly conferred authority on particular documents) and a primarily 'patristic' one (in which all the writings of a Spirit-inspired 'father' were by definition authoritative).[27]

[26] *ACO* II.1.1, 103:21–104:7 (I.238): *γράμμα παραινετικὸν ἀπέστειλεν πρὸς αὐτὸν ἔχον τὴν ἔκθεσιν τῶν ἁγίων πατέρων τῶν ἐν τῆι Νικαέων συναχθέντων καὶ ὅπως δεῖ ἐκείνην τὴν πνευματικὴν ἔκθεσιν καὶ νοεῖν καὶ φρονεῖν. ταύτην δεξάμενος Νεστόριος τὴν ἐπιστολὴν ἀντέγραψεν πρὸς αὐτὴν τῶι τῆς μακαρίας μνήμης Κυρίλλωι τὰ διεστραμ- μένα αὐτοῦ καὶ βέβηλα δόγματα δῆλα ποιῶν. ἐπὶ τούτοις κατὰ θέσπισμα τῶν φιλοχρίστων ἡμῶν βασιλέων σύνοδος συνεκροτήθη εἰς τὴν Ἐφεσίων μητρόπολιν καὶ ἐν πρώτηι τάξει ἠξίωσεν ὁ τῆς μακαρίας μνήμης Κύριλλος ἀναγινώσκεσθαι τὸ ἐπιστολιμαῖον γράμμα τὸ ἐπισταλὲν Νεστορίωι τῆι ἁγίαι καὶ μεγάληι συνόδωι, δοκιμάζεσθαι δὲ αὐτὸ παρ᾽ αὐτῆς πότερον συμβαῖνόν ἐστιν τῆι ἐκθέσει τῶν ἁγίων πατέρων ἢ ἑτέρως ἔχει. διαλαλησάσης οὖν τῆς ἁγίας ἐκείνης καὶ μεγάλης καὶ οἰκουμενικῆς συνόδου ἀνεγνώσθη ἡ ἐπιστολὴ καὶ πάντες οἱ συνεδρεύοντες ἐν τῆι μεγάληι ἐκείνηι καὶ οἰκουμενικῆι συνόδωι ἀπεφήναντο αὐτὴν σύμφωνον εἶναι τῆι ἐκθέσει τῶν ἁγίων πατέρων καὶ ταῖς θείαις γραφαῖς καὶ οὐδὲν ἀπάιδειν αὐτῶν, συνθέσθαι δὲ αὐτοὺς τοῖς ἐκτεθεῖσιν ἐν τῆι αὐτῆι ἐπιστολῆι. ταύτην καὶ νῦν παρακαλῶ τὴν ὁσιότητα ὑμῶν κελεῦσαι ἀναγνωσθῆναι ἐπὶ τῶι γενέσθαι κατάδηλον πᾶσιν ὅτιπερ κατὰ τὴν ἐν αὐτῆι τῆι ἐπιστολῆι ἐγκειμένην ἔκθεσιν οὕτω φρονοῦμεν καὶ οὕτω πεπιστεύκαμεν. ἔστι δὲ καὶ δευτέρα ἐπιστολὴ τοῦ τῆς ὁσίας μνήμης Κυρίλλου γραφεῖσα πρὸς τὴν ἁγίαν τὴν ἐν τῆι Ἀνατολῆι σύνοδον, ἡνίκα καὶ σύμβασις ἐγένετο μεταξὺ αὐτῶν, ὅπως ἔχουσιν περὶ τῆς ἐνανθρωπήσεως τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Χριστοῦ καὶ ὅπως δεῖ τὰς πανταχοῦ ἁγίας τοῦ θεοῦ ἐκκλησίας καὶ φρονεῖν καὶ κηρύττειν. καὶ ταύτας ἀξιῶ ἐπὶ τῆς πίστεως τῶν ὑπομνημάτων ἀναγνωσθείσας ἐντάττεσθαι, ὥστε εὔδηλα εἶναι πᾶσιν τὰ τῆς ἐκκλησίας δόγματα.*

[27] The distinction between 'conciliar' and 'patristic' construals is evident from the variety of episcopal responses to Eusebius' statement, for instance *ACO* II.1.1, 117:15–28 (I.301), 117:29–118:4 (I.302), 118:20–2 (I.308).

Eusebius' strategy also reminds us that it was now insufficient merely to define orthodoxy as 'Nicaea' alone—for on that basis Eutyches would have easily been able to escape any censure. Rather, to ensure a successful prosecution, Eusebius had carefully tailored the reception of Nicaea through Ephesus I to rule out (as contrary to the Nicene faith) that more strongly miaphysite version of Cyril's doctrine to which he knew Eutyches subscribed. With this construal established, Flavian then invited the assembled bishops to affirm Eusebius' statement as orthodox (echoing the procedure of 22 June 431). Flavian himself endorsed Cyril's two letters as providing 'an accurate interpretation of the thought of the holy fathers who assembled in their time at Nicaea', and, indeed, as the 'words of the Holy Spirit' (again mirroring 22 June).[28] Even here, however, Flavian engaged in a subtle sleight of hand, paraphrasing the Formula to make it appear to affirm a slightly stronger doctrine of two natures after the Incarnation.[29] This would prove to be a costly error, for in seeking further to exploit the 'Antiochene reception' of Nicaea and Ephesus, Flavian had overreached himself, and established as the faith of Nicaea a doctrine that even the Formula did not teach. Moreover, by formally setting down this doctrinal position in his synodical minutes, Flavian had given his opponents all the evidence they needed to demonstrate his heterodoxy.

Before finally arriving at the Home Synod (at its seventh session), Eutyches responded to the demands of Flavian's emissaries with a series of crafty evasions that reveal how effectively the Synod's particular construal of 'Nicaea' could be countered. Indeed, Eutyches was not, as Bevan and Gray have recently sought to portray him, a daft old man out of his depth, a mere pawn in a much bigger imperial game.[30] For, even before his shrewd and quick-witted performance at the Home Synod, Eutyches had been prominent in the controversy over Domnus and Theodoret. He had petitioned Pope Leo against the new 'Nestorians', his name was angrily shouted by the crowds of Antioch, he was described by Nestorius as enjoying Theodosius' favour as the 'bishop of bishops', and Eusebius seemed genuinely to fear his machinations.[31] Eutyches in part attempted to resist the synodical summons by pleading

[28] *ACO* II.1.1, 113:32–114:3 (I.271): *Ἀναγκαῖον καὶ εὐσεβὲς συνθέσθαι ἡμᾶς τοῖς ὀρθῶς δεδογμένοις. τίς γὰρ ἁγίου πνεύματος λόγοις ἀντιτεῖναι δυνήσεται; αἱ γὰρ ἀναγνωσθεῖσαι ἐπιστολαὶ τοῦ τῆς μακαρίας μνήμης καὶ ἐν ἁγίοις πατρὸς ἡμῶν Κυρίλλου τοῦ γενομένου ἐπισκόπου τῆς κατὰ Ἀλεξάνδρειαν ἁγιωτάτης ἐκκλησίας ἀκριβῆ τῶν ἁγίων πατέρων τῶν ἐν Νικαίαι κατὰ καιροὺς συνελθόντων τὴν διάνοιαν ἡρμήνευσαν διδάξασαι ἡμᾶς* [. . .].

[29] *ACO* II.1.1, 114:8–10 (I.271); cf. Cyril, *Ep.* 39 (*ACO* I.1.4, 17:14–15: 'of two natures a union has been made').

[30] G. A. Bevan and P. T. R. Gray (2008), 'The Trial of Eutyches: A New Interpretation', *ByzZ* 101, 617–57.

[31] Leo, *Ep.* 20; Flemming, *Akten*, 133:7 (Perry, *Ephesus*, 325); Nestorius, *Liber* (Bedjan, 459–60, Hodgson/Driver, 336); *ACO* II.1,1, 140:3–5 (I.481). Eutyches had been an ally of Cyril since Ephesus I: *ACO* I.4, 222–4 (CC.293).

a series of stock excuses (his monastic vows, his advanced age, and his ill health), but this went hand-in-hand with a more subtle strategy to put on record his own counter-articulation of the faith of Nicaea, in a form impervious to Antiochene attack. The continued lack of clarity surrounding 'Nicaea' became for Eutyches a fog in which to hide.

Eutyches' first strategy was to confess a simple biblical piety, as a way of avoiding any discussion about doctrine founded upon extra-biblical terminology. In doing so, he gave a brief account of his own understanding of the faith (as reported by Flavian's messengers):

> [Eutyches was] ready to assent to the expositions of the holy fathers who held a council at Nicaea and at Ephesus, and promised to subscribe to their interpretations, while if there happened to be some mistake or error on their part in certain expressions, this he would neither criticize nor embrace, but examine only the Scriptures as being more reliable than the exposition of the fathers [. . .] as for the assertion that our Lord Jesus Christ had come into being from two natures united hypostatically, he said that he had neither learnt it in the expositions of the holy fathers, nor, if such a statement were read to him by someone, would he accept it, since the divine Scriptures are better than the teaching of the fathers.[32]

This was a daring, but ultimately unsustainable gambit, since it threatened to undermine a basic assumption of fifth-century theological discourse: that there existed perfect harmony between the teaching of Scripture and the teaching of the 'fathers'. Eutyches did, however, here carefully follow the basic imperial construal of orthodoxy expressed in the February edict, affirming Nicaea and Ephesus as a singular conciliar phenomenon in which the fathers assembled to expound the faith.

Eutyches' next line of defence was to simply affirm the Nicene Creed, and seek not to go beyond its distinctive terminology:

> [when] the most devout presbyter and advocate John put a question to the most devout presbyter and archimandrite Eutyches as to whether he says that God the Word is consubstantial with the Father as regards his Godhead, and consubstantial with us as regards the manhood, the archimandrite Eutyches said, 'What does the Creed say?' The lord John replied that the creed has only 'consubstantial with the Father', at which the archimandrite Eutyches countered 'So hold this yourself, since I too hold it'.[33]

[32] *ACO* II.1.1, 124:20–4 (I.359): *ἕτοιμον γὰρ ἑαυτὸν εἶναι ἔφασκεν ταῖς ἐκθέσεσιν τῶν ἁγίων πατέρων τῶν τε ἐν Νικαίαι καὶ ἐν Ἐφέσωι τὴν σύνοδον ποιησαμένων συντίθεσθαι καὶ ὑπογράφειν ταῖς ἑρμηνείαις αὐτῶν ὡμολόγει, εἰ δέ που τύχοι τι παρ᾽ αὐτῶν ἔν τισιν λέξεσιν ἢ διασφαλθὲν ἢ διαπλανηθέν, τοῦτο μήτε διαβάλλειν μήτε καταδέχεσθαι, μόνας δὲ τὰς γραφὰς ἐρευνᾶν ὡς βεβαιοτέρας οὔσας τῆς τῶν πατέρων ἐκθέσεως*. A related strategy was to claim that matters touching the Godhead were too lofty to be precisely defined: *ACO* II.1.1, 135:29–136:16 (I.451), 136:28–137:12 (I.456), 142:8–10 (I.514).

[33] *ACO* II.1.1, 162:37–42 (I.667): *τοῦ εὐλαβεστάτου πρεσβυτέρουκαὶ ἐκδίκου Ἰωάννου τῶι εὐλαβεστάτωι πρεσβυτέρωι καὶ ἀρχιμανδρίτηι Εὐτυχεῖ πότερον λέγει ὁμοούσιον τῶι πατρὶ τὸν*

The emissary John's question had exposed a genuine vulnerability in Eutyches' position—namely, that he did not accept the consubstantiality of Christ's human nature with our own, and so he did indeed transgress the teaching of the Formula. Eutyches' response was to imply that this doctrine represented an unwarranted addition to the Nicene Creed, which had, after all, affirmed only the divine consubstantiality of Father and Son. Eutyches was thus able to portray himself as faithful to Nicaea (and especially to the shibboleth of its sole sufficiency), whilst avoiding being pinned down on his precise Christological position. The envoys soon returned, however, with an ingenious riposte:

> [Eutyches asked] 'Where in Scripture does 'two natures' occur? Who among the holy fathers taught that God the Word has two natures?' When we [the envoys] said to him in reply, 'then you must tell us where the homoousion occurs, or where Scripture mentions it', the same most devout Eutyches replied, 'it doesn't occur in Scripture but in the teaching of the fathers'. To this the most devout presbyter Mamas retorted, 'Just as the homoousion doesn't occur in Scripture but was taught by the fathers, so in the same way the same holy fathers taught about two natures'.[34]

Eutyches' acknowledgment of non-scriptural language in the Nicene Creed, the messengers argued, meant that he could not object to the further use of non-scriptural language for the purposes of doctrinal definition regarding the Incarnation. Eutyches could not, in other words, hide behind 'Nicaea', for Nicaea had by its very watchword (*ὁμοούσιος*) legitimized the use of non-scriptural terminology to regulate orthodoxy, and so made subsequent terminological refinements not only possible, but necessary. We note again, then, that 'Nicaea' bequeathed a dynamic, rather than static, legacy, which could promote, rather than prohibit, fresh theological expression. The envoys had nicely demonstrated that true fidelity to Nicaea precisely required Eutyches to make clear his position on the two natures of Christ.

Eutyches was by no means ready to capitulate. His third, and most effective manoeuvre, was to establish an alternative 'reading' of Nicaea via a rival documentary presentation of the Ephesine *acta*.[35] While the Home Synod

θεὸν λόγον κατὰ τὴν θεότητα καὶ ὁμοούσιον ἡμῖν κατὰ τὴν ἀνθρωπότητα, ἔφη ὁ ἀρχιμανδρίτης Εὐτυχὴς λέγων· τὸ μάθημα πῶς ἔχει; ἔφη ὁ κύρις Ἰωάννης ὅτιπερ τὸ μάθημα ἔχει ὁμοούσιον τῶι πατρὶ μόνον. ἀντιτίθησιν ὁ ἀρχιμανδρίτης Εὐτυχὴς λέγων· οὕτως οὖν ἔχε καὶ αὐτός, ἐπειδὴ κἀγὼ οὕτως ἔχω.

[34] *ACO* II.1.1, 136:2–8 (I.451): *ὅτι ἐν ποίαι γραφῆι κεῖται δύο φύσεις; ἔπειτα δὲ τίς τῶν ἁγίων πατέρων ἐξέθετο δύο φύσεις τὸν θεὸν λόγον ἔχειν; ἡμῶν δὲ πρὸς ταῦτα ἀποκριναμένων αὐτῶι· καὶ αὐτὸς δεῖξον ἡμῖν ποῦ κεῖται τὸ ὁμοούσιον ἢ ποία γραφὴ λέγει τοῦτο, ἀπεκρίθη ὁ αὐτὸς εὐλαβέστατος Εὐτυχής· οὐ κεῖται παρὰ τῆι γραφῆι, εἰς τὴν ἔκθεσιν δὲ τῶν πατέρων κεῖται. πρὸς τοῦτο ὁ εὐλαβέστατος πρεσβύτερος Μάμας ἀποκρινάμενος εἶπεν· ὃν τρόπον τὸ ὁμοούσιον οὐ κεῖται παρὰ τῆι γραφῆι, ἀλλὰ παρὰ τῶν πατέρων ἐξετέθη, οὕτω καὶ περὶ δύο φύσεων οἱ αὐτοὶ ἅγιοι πατέρες ἐξέθεντο.*

[35] Eutyches was evidently a well-prepared theological campaigner, having to hand at the first visitation of the synodical envoys a tract in which he had expressed his doctrine in impeccably Cyrilline terms: *ACO* II.1.1, 124:26–7 (I.359).

continued to send messengers demanding his attendance, Eutyches began energetically to circulate a document around the monasteries of Constantinople, which his men pressed all to sign.[36] The document was identified by the archimandrite Martin as the proceedings at Ephesus[37], and another archimandrite, Faustus, was told by Eutyches' messengers that it was 'the definitions of the 318 and of the bishops who convened at Ephesus'.[38] The basic agenda of Eutyches was thus clear: he intended to take his stand on the proceedings of Ephesus, allowing him to demonstrate his impeccable Nicene and Ephesine credentials, whilst avoiding any acknowledgement of the Formula (which, despite Eusebius' earlier efforts at documentary subterfuge, was not in fact part of Cyril's proceedings).

There was, however, evidently something unusual about the tome that Eutyches was circulating: in one monastery it was noted that Eutyches' envoy kept the signatures hidden[39], and in another, when the archimandrite Faustus sought to compare the document with his own version of the *acta* (lest it contain any additions), Eutyches' men beat a suspiciously hasty retreat.[40] It was argued in the previous chapter that, whilst the majority circulation of the Ephesine *acta* was via the 22 June proceedings (as shown too by Eusebius' statement above), a minority circulation among Cyril's allies had prioritized the 22 July session. Since we know that Cyril had years before sent his ally Eutyches a copy of the *acta*,[41] is it therefore possible that the document that Eutyches was circulating included (or solely comprised) the 22 July proceedings?[42] This would explain his envoys' reticence in allowing it to be compared to other copies (which, as suggested, would almost certainly have lacked that session), and it would also make sense of the fact that, when two of Eutyches' most fervent supporters (Carosus and Dorotheus) subsequently attempted to articulate the Nicene faith at Chalcedon, they did so by submitting the proceedings of 22 July.[43] Most tellingly of all, it was precisely through recourse to the record of the 22 July session (and especially its 'Canon 7') that Eutyches and Dioscorus would later accuse Eusebius and Flavian of having impiously added to the Nicene Creed in promulgating a 'two natures' Christology.

Rather than face an oral debate on Eusebius' terms, then, Eutyches sought to establish a textual debate, using a carefully tailored form of the proceedings of

[36] *ACO* II.1.1, 126:33–5 (I.381), 127:13–15 (I.392).

[37] *ACO* II.1.1, 113.19 (I.436), 133:25 (I.438), 133:29 (I.440).

[38] *ACO* II.1.1, 133:32–4 (I.440): *καὶ ἀπήιτει τὴν δύναμιν τοῦ τόμου καὶ ἔλεγεν ἐκεῖνος ὅτι τῶν τριακοσίων δέκα καὶ ὀκτώ ἐστιν ἡ ἔκθεσις καὶ τῶν ἐν Ἐφέσωι συλλεγέντων ἐπισκόπων.*

[39] *ACO* II.1.1, 133:29–30 (I.440).

[40] *ACO* II.1.1, 133:34–5 (I.440).

[41] *ACO* II.1.1, 91:12 (I.157).

[42] Significantly, of course, the 22 July proceedings, just like those of 22 June, contained the full text of the Nicene Creed.

[43] *ACO* II.1.1, 313:40–314.2 (IV.88). They here present the text of a conciliar statement from Ephesus I, which they describe as containing both the Creed and the 'decree that confirms it'—this must refer to the session of 22 July, and not to that of 22 June (which passed no such decree).

Ephesus I to affirm his fidelity to Nicaea, shield his own doctrinal idiosyncrasies from attack, and construe his opponents' position as transgressing Nicaea through unwarranted addition. In the conflict between Eusebius and Eutyches we witness the clash not merely of two conflicting ideas of 'Nicaea', but of two opposed receptions of Nicaea via Ephesus, each instantiated in a distinct version of the Ephesine *acta*.

The climactic final session of the Home Synod began with a clear demonstration of imperial support for Eutyches, as he arrived flanked by monks, soldiers, and imperial officials.[44] Moreover, the silentiary Magnus had brought a special message from Theodosius, in which the emperor reiterated his own construal of orthodoxy as comprising 'the creed that was proclaimed correctly and under divine inspiration by our fathers the 318 who convened at Nicaea, and by those who convened at Ephesus for the deposition of Nestorius'.[45] This unadorned appeal to 'Nicaea and Ephesus' reiterated the construal of orthodoxy that Theodosius had advanced against the 'Nestorians' in his February edict, and which Eutyches and Dioscorus would exploit as a cover for their hard-line Cyrillianism. Bevan and Gray's thesis that the imperial intervention at the Home Synod signalled Theodosius' turning against Eutyches (before, they argue, inexplicably favouring him again in 449), is thus unpersuasive—it is far more likely that Theodosius had for months recognized that the resurgent Antiochene party had rendered the settlement of 433 unworkable, and so had thrown his support behind Eutyches and Dioscorus.[46]

Eutyches, now finally present at the Home Synod, continued his earlier documentary strategy, repeatedly pressing for his various carefully worded articulations of the faith of Nicaea to be read out, and so formally entered into the synodical record.[47] Flavian was savvy enough to realize that this would have established an alternative construal of the Nicene faith which he did not have the discursive resources persuasively to combat, and so he consistently intervened to prevent Eutyches' documents from being read.[48] Flavian insisted, rather, that Eutyches had to respond to the definition of Nicene orthodoxy

[44] *ACO* II.1.1, 137:32–138:14 (I.463–6).

[45] *ACO* II.1.1, 138:19–21 (I.468): *καὶ φυλάττεσθαι θέλομεν τὴν ὀρθῶς καὶ θεοπνεύστως ἐκφωνηθεῖσαν πίστιν παρὰ τῶν πατέρων ἡμῶν τῶν ἐν Νικαίαι συναχθέντων τῶν τριακοσίων δέκα καὶ ὀκτὼ καὶ τῶν ἐν Ἐφέσωι τῶν ἐπὶ τῆι καθαιρέσει Νεστορίου.*

[46] Bevan and Gray, 'Eutyches', 638–9. The account of Schwartz, *Prozess*, 75ff. is still to be preferred. The lack of evidence for Bevan and Gray's proposal of Theodosius' sudden volte-face is rather conveniently explained away: this 'reversal in imperial policy was quickly covered up and it has left few traces in the sources' (p. 655).

[47] Cf. *ACO* II.1.1, 128:28–33 (I.397). Eutyches' impressive display at the seventh session, and the lengths to which Flavian and Eusebius went to prevent him from making a full defence of his position, further cast doubt upon Bevan and Gray's depiction of him as clueless and confused—tellingly, their thesis requires them to attribute Eutyches' deft written statements of belief to the influence of another hand (cf. 'Eutyches', 641).

[48] For instance: *ACO* II.1.1, 130:27–32 (I.416–17).

that the synod had already established.[49] He thus restated Eusebius' earlier account of the Nicene faith, and Eusebius himself highlighted that it was the doctrine of the Formula that Eutyches especially opposed.[50] Yet, as noted above, Flavian's attempt to enforce 'two natures after the Incarnation' pushed beyond the actual wording of the Formula—tellingly, when Eutyches was presented with the Formula's precise terminology ('of two natures a union has been made') he was able to affirm it.[51]

Meanwhile, Eutyches continued to demand that his own statement of the faith be read,[52] and, when a snippet of it did creep into the proceedings it nicely demonstrated why Flavian had been so wary. For Eutyches simply affirmed that Christ's 'coming in flesh was from the flesh of the Holy Virgin', carefully acknowledging his belief in Christ's humanity, whist leaving unsaid the question of His consubstantiality with men.[53] Flavian was, indeed, ultimately pushed into a position that bordered on the ludicrous: Eutyches agreed, under heavy pressure, to parrot a 'two natures' confession along precisely the lines that Flavian demanded, at which point Flavian claimed that Eutyches must still be condemned since he had only made the confession under compulsion![54]

If Flavian's recourse to 'Nicaea' proved problematic, then his appeal to the 'fathers' met with no greater success. For Eutyches, knowing that his own position ('one nature of the Logos incarnate') could claim the great father Cyril in its defence, launched a powerful attack on the patristic credentials of Flavian's doctrine: 'I have read in the blessed Cyril, in the holy fathers, and in Saint Athanasius that they said "from two natures" before the union, but after the union and the incarnation they no longer affirmed two natures but one'.[55] And again: 'have the writings of Saint Athanasius read. Then you will discover that he says nothing of the kind!'[56] This was a particularly damaging accusation, since Flavian and Eusebius had portrayed their own position as faithful to Cyril's teaching, and Athanasius was the great father prioritized in the Formula itself. What they had presented as the fullness of Nicaea's teaching could thus be easily construed by Eutyches as a heretical innovation.

[49] *ACO* II.1.1, 131:3–5 (I.417), 132:10–12 (I.426). [50] *ACO* II.1.1, 139:26–8 (I.147).

[51] *ACO* II.1.1, 140:22 (I.489). [52] *ACO* II.1.1, 141:5–7 (I.498).

[53] *ACO* II.1.1, 141:22–3 (I.505): *ὁμολογῶ δὲ τὴν ἔνσαρκον αὐτοῦ παρουσίαν γεγενῆσθαι ἐκ τῆς σαρκὸς τῆς ἁγίας παρθένου.*

[54] *ACO* II.1.1, 142:34–5 (I.523); cf. 145:7–9 (I.550). Flavian similarly claimed that Eutyches had not confessed the orthodox faith *clearly*: *ACO* II.1.1, 144:4–6 (I.537).

[55] *ACO* II.1.1, 144:18–20 (I.542): *Ἐγὼ ἀνέγνων τοῦ μακαρίου Κυρίλλου καὶ τῶν ἁγίων πατέρων καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου Ἀθανασίου ὅτι ἐκ δύο μὲν φύσεων εἶπον πρὸ τῆς ἑνώσεως, μετὰ δὲ τὴν ἕνωσιν καὶ τὴν σάρκωσιν οὐκέτι δύο φύσεις εἶπον, ἀλλὰ μίαν*; cf. the accusation that Flavian's Christology was not found in Scripture or the fathers (*ACO* II.1.1, 143:32–144:1 [I.535]), and Flavian's weak response (*ACO* II.1.1, 143:4–5 [I.525]).

[56] *ACO* II.1.1, 144:24–5 (I.544): *Ἀναγνωσθῆναι κελεύσατε τὰ τοῦ ἁγίου Ἀθανασίου, ἵνα γνῶτε ὅτι οὐδὲν τοιοῦτον λέγει.*

Lacking the resources effectively to challenge this intervention, Flavian hastily concluded the session by reading out a pre-prepared judgement on Eutyches.[57]

Eusebius and Flavian had sought to articulate a coherent account of the faith of 'Nicaea' that would have convincingly ruled out Eutyches' hard-line Cyrillianism, but their efforts had been fatally undermined by Eutyches' own subtle exploitation of Nicaea's conceptual plasticity. Yet if Flavian had lost the rhetorical battle, he could still hope to win the textual war. Indeed, a fascinating coda to the proceedings of the Home Synod is provided by the subsequent investigation into the accuracy of its *acta* in April 449, which reveals the considerable degree to which Flavian shaped the documentary record of the session to his own ends.[58] The enquiry showed that Flavian had taken advantage of the envoys' difficulty in recording precisely what Eutyches had said in order to emphasize his apparent denigration of the fathers, while subtly omitting his claims to be faithful to Nicaea.[59] The investigation also demonstrated that Flavian had recontextualized the remarks of Florentius (the imperial *patricius*) to Eutyches so that they appeared more adversarial, and had attributed to Florentius hostile questions that had in fact been asked by Flavian himself.[60] In addition, where his case seemed weakest or most open to challenge, Flavian had attributed to all the words of some.[61]

Most significant, however, was Flavian's deliberate removal of material connected with Eutyches' written confession of faith. Witnesses at the April enquiry claimed that, during the final session of the Home Synod, Eutyches had presented a document 'containing the creed of the 318, as confirmed by the holy council at Ephesus'.[62] Florentius' request to have Eutyches' statement read was also omitted from the record.[63] Indeed, the enquiry revealed that Eutyches had, in fact, formally read this document to the synod, beginning as follows:

> As I stand in the presence of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, whom I have worshipped, worship now and shall worship in future, I believe as the 318 fathers at Nicaea decreed and the holy council at Ephesus confirmed.[64]

[57] *ACO* II.1.1, 173:37–9 (I.794); cf. *ACO* II.1.1, 133:34–5 (I.440).

[58] Flavian was very uncomfortable about scrutiny of his minutes (*ACO* II.1.1, 172:21–2 [I.781]). The notary Asterius confessed to seizing all the documents at the end of the synod, lest others falsify them—demonstrating the increasing importance of control over the conciliar record: *ACO* II.1.1, 176:27–33 (I.827), 178:38–179:6 (I.846).

[59] *ACO* II.1.1, 156:25f (I.620–1), 158:13–14 (I.636–7), 161:29–30 (I.652), 162:31–42 (I.667), 163:9–21 (I.672), 165:24–31 (I.698).

[60] *ACO* II.1.1, 167:1–6 (I.721), 171:25f (I.772f). Bevan and Gray's interpretation of Florentius' role at the Home Synod errs by failing to take into account the evidence unearthed in April 449.

[61] *ACO* II.1.1, 170:15–171:2 (I.757–67), cf. *ACO* II.1.1, 144:3 (I.536).

[62] *ACO* II.1.1, 167:20–1 (I.728): *πρότερον ἐπεδίδου τὸν λίβελλον ἔνθα ἡ πίστις τῶν τιη περιείχετο, καθὼς καὶ ἐν Ἐφέσωι ἡ ἁγία σύνοδος ἐβεβαίωσεν.*

[63] *ACO* II.1.1, 167:34–7 (I.733).

[64] *ACO* II.1.1, 168:31–4 (I.737): *ἑστὼς ἐνώπιον τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος, ὃν προσεκύνησα καὶ προσκυνῶ καὶ προσκυνήσω, ὅτι οὕτω φρονῶ ὡς οἱ πατέρες οἱ*

Flavian evidently did not want an alternative construal of 'Nicaea' entered into the synodical record, where it might problematize his own careful presentation of orthodoxy—especially when his overarching intention was to condemn Eutyches precisely for believing *contrary* to the faith of Nicaea and Ephesus. Flavian's guilt on this point is further suggested by the succession of evasive responses at the enquiry: Flavian blames the notaries, the notaries blame the bishops, and the bishops deploy all kinds of excuses (most notably a convenient loss of memory as to what occurred).[65] Bishop Longinus' response, however, is striking:

> As for the claim made just now by the most devout deacon Eleusinius that he [Eutyches] said, 'I hold what the 318 holy fathers at Nicaea did and those at Ephesus confirmed', the latest evidence proves that he refused to acknowledge that Christ our Lord was born consubstantial with us in respect of the flesh.[66]

Longinus suggests that Eutyches cannot have truly confessed Nicaea (irrespective of what he actually said) because he failed to affirm Christ's double consubstantiality, which Longinus evidently regards as a necessary part of the Nicene faith. Again, then, we note how 'Nicaea' acted as a cypher for a variety of underlying theological positions. Indeed, the enquiry also found that Flavian had prevented other bishops from contributing their own declarations of the Nicene faith (in order to see if Eutyches would agree with them).[67] Flavian no doubt feared that Eutyches would have been able to subscribe to many of these statements, had they defined the faith of Nicaea and Ephesus loosely—he could not risk the authority to interpret Nicaea slipping out of his control.

The April investigation, finally, revealed that Flavian had also removed Basil of Seleucia's attempt to find common ground between himself and Eutyches regarding the legacy of Athanasius. Basil had suggested that whilst Athanasius had indeed affirmed 'one nature of the Logos incarnate' (as Eutyches claimed), the qualifying statement of 'became incarnate and made man' was necessary to prevent misunderstanding.[68] But Flavian would evidently not permit any hint that Eutyches could validly claim Athanasius in support of his own doctrine, and so Basil's remark was modified in the minutes from one of conciliation to

τιη οἱ ἐν Νικαίαι ἐθέσπισαν καὶ ἡ ἐν Ἐφέσωι ἐβεβαίωσεν ἁγία σύνοδος. Eutyches made the same claim in his subsequent appeal to Pope Leo (Leo, *Ep.* 21).

[65] *ACO* II.1.1, 133:35 ff. (I.738 ff.).

[66] *ACO* II.1.1, 169:13–16 (I.743): *τὸ δὲ λέγειν ἄρτι τὸν εὐλαβέστατον Ἐλευσίνιον ὅτι εἶπεν 'ὡς οἱ τιη ἅγιοι πατέρες οἱ ἐν Νικαίαι καὶ οἱ ἐν Ἐφέσωι ἐβεβαίωσαν, οὕτως ἔχω', δείκνυται καὶ ἐκ τῶν τελευταίων ὅπου οὐκ ἠθέλησεν ὁμολογῆσαι τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν τὸν Χριστὸν ὁμοούσιον ἡμῖν κατὰ τὴν σάρκα γεγενῆσθαι.*

[67] *ACO* II.1.1, 173:11–16 (I.789).

[68] *ACO* II.1.1, 172:34–173:31 (I.788–791).

threat: 'if you do not affirm two natures after the incarnation, you imply mixture and confusion'.[69]

To conclude, the evidence of the Home Synod (and its subsequent enquiry) reveals the continued centrality of the idea of 'Nicaea' in provoking and exacerbating ecclesial controversy. The preceding months had exposed the profound gulf between the Antiochene 'reading' of Nicaea and Ephesus, whereby the hermeneutical prioritization of the Formula could legitimize the promulgation of a strongly dyophysite Christology, and the hard-line Cyrillian 'reading' of Nicaea and Ephesus, which recognized all of Cyril's writings, most especially his *Anathemas*, as possessing a special interpretive authority. The Home Synod thus witnessed the beginning of an open conflict between these divergent trajectories of reception, as each sought to have its construal of Nicaea enshrined as alone authoritative. Moreover, the proceedings of the Home Synod demonstrate that these different ideas of 'Nicaea' were increasingly being expressed through subtle documentary strategies, just as the text of the Nicene Creed itself was now being read primarily within the context of carefully tailored conciliar proceedings. Indeed, Flavian's own deft shaping of the Home Synod's record nicely illustrates the opportunities that a shrewd manipulation of the textual record could offer.

Eutyches' resourceful responses, however, reveal that such documentary strategies could also be used to articulate threatening counter-construals of Nicaea, which both shielded doctrinal idiosyncrasies behind the affirmation of simplistic cyphers ('Nicaea and Ephesus') and also portrayed opponents' efforts to clarify the Nicene faith as heretical attempts to add to it. Indeed, the success of Eutyches' endeavours is shown by the fact that Flavian could not ultimately *prove* the superiority of his version of the Nicene faith, but only *impose* it. The authority of councils and their written proceedings loomed so large during 448–51 precisely because Nicaea's conceptual flexibility meant that the battle for orthodoxy was more effectively fought on the page than in the flesh, and more effectively asserted than argued for.

Moreover, the struggle between Flavian and Eutyches had brought some significant questions to the fore. What was the precise nature of the confirmation of Nicaea at Ephesus? Which version of the Ephesine *acta* most fully expressed its achievement and conveyed its authority? Which of Cyril's writings possessed a hermeneutical priority in expounding the faith of Nicaea? The events of the Home Synod testify to Flavian's failure satisfactorily to resolve these questions; within months, Dioscorus would get his own chance to provide an answer.

[69] *ACO* II.1.1, 144:26–7 (I.545): *Ἐὰν μὴ δύο φύσεις μετὰ τὴν ἕνωσιν εἴπῃς, σύγκρασιν λέγεις καὶ σύγχυσιν.*

6

The Idea of Nicaea at Ephesus II (449)

The Ephesine synod of August 449 provided Dioscorus with the opportunity to articulate his own interpretation of the faith of Nicaea and Ephesus, and, with the full authority of an oecumenical council behind him, to enshrine that interpretation as alone authoritative. Thus, for Dioscorus, the work of Ephesus I could be finally completed, the new Cyril condemning the new 'Nestoriuses',[1] and so confirming afresh the authentic faith of Nicaea. Indeed, the nine months between the Home Synod and Ephesus II witnessed the further development of Dioscorus and Eutyches' strategy to undermine the dyophysite reading of 'Nicaea' (via the Formula), and to establish their own construal as truly faithful to the fathers of 325 and 431.

Eutyches wasted no time in publicizing the injustice of Flavian's synod, and his own impeccably Nicene credentials. He displayed written *contestationes* around Constantinople (quickly removed by Flavian's men), which proclaimed that he had always held to the faith of Nicaea as confirmed at Ephesus.[2] He commended his case to Dioscorus, who immediately received him into communion and rejected Flavian's verdict against him.[3] Most significantly of all, Eutyches appealed to Pope Leo. Here again he presented himself as unswervingly loyal to 'that faith which was put forth at Nicaea by the holy synod, and truly confirmed at Ephesus', and complained that, at the Home Synod, Flavian had refused to have his written confession of the faith read.[4] The full text of this *confessio* (which Eutyches attached to his letter) nicely reveals why Flavian had been so keen to prevent the document's inclusion in the synodical records. For it is a simple affirmation of fidelity to 'the same faith as that which was laid down by the holy synod of 318 most blessed bishops who were gathered at Nicaea from the whole world, and which was confirmed and ratified afresh for sole acceptance by the holy synod

[1] *ACO* II.1.1, 118:10 (I.304).

[2] *ACO* II.2.1, 35:23–4, 35:29–32; cf. Leo, *Ep.* 21 (*ACO* II.4, 144:25–28).

[3] Mansi, VI, 1045, 1099.

[4] Leo, *Ep.* 21 (*ACO* II.4, 144:9–10): fidem quae Nicaeae exposita est a sancta synodo, confirmata vero apud Ephesum.

assembled at Ephesus'.[5] Just as he had done at the Home Synod, Eutyches thus shrewdly advanced an entirely uncontroversial avowal of 'Nicaea and Ephesus', in order to outmanoeuvre any attacks on his orthodoxy, and to portray his opponents as heretically adding to this pure faith.

Moreover, Eutyches now sharpened his argument further, appealing directly to the Ephesine proceedings of 22 July.[6] Eutyches explained that he had refused to assent to Flavian's doctrine of two natures after the Incarnation because he 'feared the decision of the synod, not wanting to take away or to add one word contrary to the faith put forward by the holy synod of Nicaea'.[7] Eutyches then made explicit which 'decision' he meant, by providing a lengthy quotation from the proceedings of 22 July.[8] In fact, he subtly juxtaposed two separate parts of the conciliar record: the initial affirmation of the Nicene Creed (with the credal text cited in full), and the subsequent judgement following Charisius' plaint.[9] This had the effect of decontextualizing that latter 'canon' (a specific ruling regarding the reception of penitent heretics), making it appear to be a blanket ban on any other credal statement. Eutyches had thus forged a potent weapon: by reorienting the achievement of Ephesus around the 22 July (building on Cyril's earlier efforts), he could portray *any* attempt at further doctrinal clarification not only as an impious addition to Nicaea but as falling under the condemnation of Ephesus. Flavian's efforts to depict himself as the true interpreter of Nicaea and Ephesus (via the Formula) were in this way seriously undermined—for, Eutyches contended, Flavian had not in fact followed the teaching of Ephesus, but had rather directly contravened it.

Meanwhile, Flavian pursued his own 'Nicene' strategy in seeking to commend the decision of the Home Synod. Writing to Leo, he emphasized that Eutyches had placed himself outside the Nicene faith by seeking to upset 'the exposition of the faith composed by the 318 holy fathers, and the letter that Cyril of holy memory wrote to Nestorius, and one by the same author on the same subject to the Easterners'.[10] In this way, Flavian construed his own interpretation of Nicaea and Ephesus (via the *Second Letter* and the Formula)

[5] Leo, *Ep.* 21 (*ACO* II.4, 145:8–11): quemadmodum sancta et ex universe orbe terrarum apud Nicaeam habita synodus trecentorum decem et octo beatissimorum episcoporum fidem constituit et quam confirmavit ac definivit denuo optinere solam sancta synodus Ephesi collecta.

[6] This further suggests that Eutyches had been using the 22 July *acta* in his earlier monastic campaign.

[7] Leo, *Ep.* 21 (*ACO* II.4, 144:11–13): ego autem metuens definitionem a synodo nec adimere nec addere verbum contra expositam fidem a sacta synodo Nicaena.

[8] *ACO* II.2.1, 42:5–35. By placing this quotation at the end of a long list of patristic citations, Eutyches made the conciliar proceedings into a kind of 'corporate father', summing up their testimony.

[9] Eutyches juxtaposed *ACO* I.1.7, 88:1–89:13 (CA.74.3) with *ACO* I.1.7, 105:20–106:8 (CA.77).

[10] Leo, *Ep.* 22 (*ACO* II.1.1, 37:1–3): *τὴν δὲ τῶν τιη ἁγίων πατέρων περὶ τῆς πίστεως γεγενημένην ἔκθεσιν καὶ τὴν τοῦ τῆς ὁσίας μνήμης Κυρίλλου πρός τε Νεστόριον γραφεῖσαν ἐπιστολὴν καὶ τὴν πρὸς τοὺς τῆς Ἀνατολῆς τοῦ αὐτοῦ ὁμοίως* […].

as long-established, whilst depicting Eutyches' doctrine as a blasphemous innovation. Flavian based his argument on the carefully tailored written proceedings of the Home Synod itself, which he sent to Leo with the letter.[11] Tellingly, Cyril's *Second Letter* was now so closely associated with its formal affirmation at Ephesus I (and so commonly read in that particular documentary context), that Flavian could quote from the *Second Letter* in the context of its place within Cyril's *acta*.[12]

Leo's response to these various entreaties—his celebrated *Tomus* (*Ep.* 27)—only succeeded in injecting further confusion into the controversy over Nicaea. Convinced by Flavian's *acta* that Eutyches had indeed departed from the orthodox faith, Leo offered a lengthy refutation of the archimandrite's doctrine. Crucially, however, Leo based his case upon the Apostles' Creed, not the Nicene Creed. Eutyches' error, Leo argued, was that he failed to understand the first words of the Creed—for in that universal confession the faithful confess that they believe in 'God the Father Almighty, and in Jesus Christ, His only Son our Lord, who was born of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary'.[13] A curious overlap in credal texts meant that the clause ('born of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary') that Leo now made central to his case against Eutyches was the same one that had been employed by Nestorius against Cyril, and which Cyril had subsequently lambasted as an erroneous addition to the Nicene Creed! It is therefore unsurprising that Eutyches' allies soon construed Leo's accurate citation of the Apostles' Creed as, in fact, an inaccurate (indeed 'Nestorian') citation of the Nicene Creed.[14] In any case, for Leo the Apostles' Creed was the all-sufficient guarantor of orthodoxy, and if Eutyches had 'been content to receive that creed in its entirety with a pure and simple heart, he would at no point go astray from the decrees of the most sacred council of Nicaea'.[15] In the event, Dioscorus' refusal to have the *Tomus* read at Ephesus II ensured that the problems that Leo's construal of orthodoxy raised would not be confronted until Chalcedon.

It quickly became apparent, however, that the emperor's support lay with Dioscorus and Eutyches, not Flavian. Flavian was commanded by Theodosius to produce a written statement of his faith, and his evasiveness on the doctrine of the two natures (in sharp contrast to his forthright remarks at the Home

[11] Leo, *Ep.* 22 (*ACO* II.1.1, 37:16–17).

[12] Leo, *Ep.* 26 (*ACO* II.1.1, 39:3–8). Flavian's assumption of Leo's familiarity with the Ephesine proceedings of 22 June (*ACO* II.1.1, 39:9–10) again suggests a wide circulation.

[13] Leo, *Ep.* 28.1 (*ACO* II.2.1, 25:6), 28.2 (*ACO* II.2.1, 25:11–12): in deum patrem omnipotentem et in Iesum Christum filium eius unicum, dominum nostrum, qui natus est de spiritu sancto et Maria virgine […].

[14] Cf. Vigilius of Thapsus, *Contra Eut.* IV.1.

[15] Leo, *Ep.* 31.4 (*ACO* II.4, 15:2–4): cuius symboli plenitudinem si Eutyches puro et simplici voluisset corde concipere, in nullo a decretis sacratissimi Nicaeni concilii deviaret et hoc a sanctis patribus intellegeret constitutum […].

Synod) indicated how far he had been pushed onto the defensive.[16] Tellingly, Flavian now took refuge, just as Eutyches had done at the Synod, in a simple affirmation of 'the expositions of the holy fathers who met at Nicaea, and of those who met at Ephesus in the time of Cyril, Bishop of Alexandria, of blessed memory'.[17] Theodosius was, however, in no way satisfied—he swiftly accepted Eutyches' and Dioscorus' calls for an oecumenical council to settle the controversy, and (as discussed above) arranged for a formal investigation into the Home Synod.[18] Indeed, the real purpose of this enquiry, as Florentius' concluding remarks revealed, was to set on record the unreliability of Flavian's version of events, and so to provide further damning evidence for the upcoming council.[19]

Theodosius' preparations for Ephesus II represent a significant shift in his strategy from Ephesus I. Recognizing the naivety of his earlier expectation that the assembled bishops would arrive at a settlement amicably and unaided, the emperor now sought to exert a far tighter control over proceedings. The authentic idea of 'Nicaea' would not be arrived at after days of episcopal discussion, nor would the council's outcome be left to chance—all, rather, would be dictated from the start. The first session of Ephesus II opened, indeed, with the meticulous presentation of the various imperial instructions: Dioscorus was to preside, Juvenal and Thalassius were to assist him, and the imperial commissioners Helpidius and Eulogius (with the proconsul Proclus) were to keep good order.[20] Instructions on attendance were similarly robust, and clearly indicated where the imperial favour lay: the fanatically anti-Nestorian Barsaumas was invited, Theodoret was excluded, and Flavian and Eusebius were to attend but were not to take any active part in proceedings.[21]

Most significantly of all, the council was directed to 'decree the preservation of the orthodox faith', and so expel 'the promoters and supporters of the impious blasphemy of Nestorius'.[22] That faith was identified as 'the orthodox

[16] *ACO* II.1.1, 35–6; cf. Kinzig, *Formulae*, II, 88–90.

[17] *ACO* II.1.1, 35:10–12: *καὶ ταῖς ἐκθέσεσι τῶν ἁγίων πατέρων τῶν τε ἐν Νικαίαι [καὶ ἐν Κωνσταντινουπόλει] συνελθόντων καὶ τῶν ἐν Ἐφέσωι ἐπὶ τοῦ τῆς ὁσίας μνήμης Κυρίλλου τοῦ γενομένου ἐπισκόπου τῆς Ἀλεξανδρέων*. Note that the words '*καὶ ἐν Κωνσταντινουπόλει*' are very likely to be a later addition, and so are rightly bracketed out by Schwartz.

[18] Cf. Mansi, VI, 588–9, 764. Flavian was desperate to prevent a new oecumenical council, knowing its likely outcome: cf. Leo, *Ep.* 26; Nestorius, *Liber* (Bedjan, 469–71; Hodgson/Driver, 342–3).

[19] Cf. *ACO* II.1.1, 176:25–6 (I.826), 176:34–7 (I.828).

[20] *ACO* II.1.1, 68:2–69:6 (I.24), 71:20–30 (I.48), 72:5–30 (I.49), 73:4–18 (I.50), 73:21–74:6 (I.51), 74:9–28 (I.52).

[21] *ACO* II.1.1, 71:2–13 (I.47), 72:20–2 (I.49), 74:9–13 (I.52).

[22] *ACO* II.1.1, 74:3–5 (I.51): *καὶ τοὺς τὴν τοῦ ἀσεβοῦς Νεστορίου βλασφημίαν ζηλοῦντας ἢ συγκροτοῦντας ἐκ τῶν ἁγίων ἐκκλησιῶν ἐκβαλεῖν, τὴν δὲ ὀρθόδοξον πίστιν βεβαίαν καὶ ἀσάλευτον τυπῶσαι παραφυλαχθῆναι* [...].

creed that the holy fathers at Nicaea handed down and that the holy council of Ephesus confirmed'—a faith that 'fully satisfies our needs'.[23] In addition, those 'who dare to make any addition to, or subtraction from, the exposition of the faith by the holy fathers at Nicaea and later at Ephesus' were to be regarded as alien to orthodoxy.[24] Theodosius' construal of the Nicene faith thus precisely followed the model already established by Dioscorus and Eutyches: under the cover of a simple confession of 'Nicaea and Ephesus', a hard-line Cyrillianism would be imposed as alone legitimate, and, through an appeal to 'Canon 7' of 22 July 431, the Antiochene idea of Nicaea would be condemned as contravening Ephesus, and as impiously adding to the all-sufficient Creed.

Theodosius' concern, however, was not merely to re-affirm the achievement of Ephesus I, but to retrace it. He commanded that just as Nestorius' blasphemy 'was the occasion of the holy council already held previously at Ephesus', and had 'received condign condemnation from the holy fathers assembled there', so the recent revival of the Nestorian heresy required the convocation of 'this second council of Ephesus, in our concern to completely excise the root of evil'.[25] The authority and legitimacy of the second Ephesine council was thus expressed in its careful mirroring of the first: the bishops of August 449 met in the same city (indeed, in the same church) as their illustrious forebears, to condemn the same enemies, under the presidency of the same see. The faith of Nicaea was again to be confirmed, but *through* its earlier confirmation in 431. Accordingly, when Dioscorus had the Nicene Creed quoted at the climax of the first session, it was via the Creed's earlier citation in the *acta* of Ephesus I. Likewise, when Flavian and Eusebius were formally condemned, it was via the Ephesine ruling of 22 July. Ephesus II presented itself, then, as engaged in a kind of conciliar mimesis: just as Ephesus I confirmed the faith of Nicaea, so Ephesus II confirmed the faith of Nicaea and Ephesus, recapitulating the activity of the former council and so reapplying its verdict afresh. Dioscorus recognized, in short, that a radical change to the idea of 'Nicaea' was best secured precisely through denying that there had been any change at all.[26]

[23] *ACO* II.1.1, 73:28–9 (I.51): *πεπεισμένοι ἀρκεῖν ἡμῖν τὴν παραδοθεῖσαν παρὰ τῶν ἁγίων πατέρων τῶν ἐν Νικαίαι ὀρθόδοξον πίστιν, ἣν καὶ ἡ ἁγία σύνοδος ἡ ἐν Ἐφέσωι ἐβεβαίωσεν.*

[24] *ACO* II.1.1, 74:24–7 (I.52): *τοὺς γὰρ κατά τι προσθήκην τινὰ ἢ μείωσιν τῶν ἐκτεθέντων περὶ τῆς πίστεως παρὰ τῶν ἁγίων ἐν Νικαίαι πατέρων καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα ἐν Ἐφέσωι ἐπιχειρήσαντας εἰπεῖν οὐδεμίαν παντελῶς παρρησίαν ἐν τῆι ἁγίαι συνόδωι ἔχειν ἀνεχόμεθα, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὑπὸ τὴν ὑμετέραν εἶναι κρίσιν βουλόμεθα* [...].

[25] *ACO* II.1.1, 73:4–8 (I.50): *Τῆς μὲν ἤδη γενομένης πρότερον ἐν Ἐφέσωι ἁγίας συνόδου ἡ Νεστορίου τοῦ δυσσεβοῦς πρὸς τὸν θεὸν βλασφημία γέγονεν αἰτία καὶ διὰ τοῦτο τὴν ἀξίαν παρὰ τῶν συνελθόντων ἐκεῖσε ἁγίων πατέρων ἐδέξατο ψῆφον· ἐπειδὴ δὲ καὶ νῦν ἑτέρα πάλιν ἀμφισβήτησις κατὰ τῆς θείας ἐγήγερται πίστεως, τὴν δευτέραν ταύτην ἐν Ἐφέσωι γενέσθαι σύνοδον ἐθεσπίσαμεν* [...]; cf. *ACO* II.1.1, 82:7–18 (I.79).

[26] For such a denial: *ACO* II.1.1, 86:31–87:5 (I.119).

With the emperor's instructions formally read, Dioscorus could proceed to examine the case of Eutyches with the imperial account of the faith clearly established. Indeed, since the emperor's articulation of 'Nicaea and Ephesus' had been expressed in a manner entirely concordant with Eutyches' own construal, the hearing of the archimandrite's plaint gave Dioscorus another opportunity to hammer home the new Nicene orthodoxy. Accordingly, Eutyches' document professed his loyalty to the faith of Nicaea as confirmed at Ephesus.[27] As in his appeal to Leo, Eutyches prioritized as Ephesus I's key work the 'decree that whoever added to it [the Creed] in thought or teaching is subject to the penalties then laid down'.[28] Again Eutyches claimed that it was 'out of fear of transgressing the decree' that he had refused to assent to Flavian's doctrine at the Home Synod, since it 'required me to make certain statements that went beyond the definitions at Nicaea and at the previous council of Ephesus'.[29] Thus, Eutyches positioned himself as the humble follower of Nicaea and Ephesus, avoided clarifying his own doctrine, and portrayed Flavian and Eusebius as expounding 'a different creed from that issued at Nicaea and confirmed at the earlier council here'.[30]

Dioscorus' procedural organization of the session, and his careful shaping of its written record, was masterful. Recognizing how effectively Eutyches had undermined the efforts of Flavian at the Home Synod by setting on record an alternative idea of 'Nicaea', Dioscorus ensured that, at Ephesus II, no such counter-construals were heard. Leo's *Tomus*, with its claim that the credal faith spoke against the doctrine of Eutyches, was 'received', but not read or entered into the official proceedings.[31] A request from Flavian's supporters that an examination of the faith of Nicaea and Ephesus be conducted before hearing Eutyches' plaint was ignored, and entirely omitted from the council's record.[32] Most tellingly, when the reading of the Home Synod's proceedings

[27] *ACO* II.1.1, 90:17 ff. (I.157).

[28] *ACO* II.1.1, 91:10–11 (I.157): *καὶ ὅρον ἐξήνεγκεν τὸν παρὰ ταύτην προστιθέντα τι ἢ ἐπινοοῦντα ἢ διδάσκοντα ἐπιτιμίοις τοῖς τότε ἐγγραφεῖσιν ὑποκεῖσθαι* [...]; cf. *ACO* II.1.1, 94:24 ff. (I.185).

[29] *ACO* II.1.1, 95:14–16 (I.185): *ἀπήιτει με ἕτερά τινα παρὰ τὰ ἐκτεθέντα ἔν τε τῆι Νικαέων καὶ ἐν Ἐφέσωι πρότερον εἰπεῖν. ἐγὼ δὲ φοβηθεὶς παραβῆναι τόν τε ἐξενεχθέντα ὅρον ὑπὸ τῆς ἁγίας συνόδου τῆς ἐνταῦθα συνειλεγμένης πρώην κατὰ βούλησιν θεοῦ* [...]; Ephesus II's condemnation of Flavian on this latter point was, indeed, perfectly valid: W. de Vries (1975), 'Das Konzil von Ephesus 449, eine "Räubersynode"?', *OCP* 41, 357–98.

[30] *ACO* II.1.1, 118:11–13 (I.305): *Ἐκ τῶν ἀναγινωσκομένων ἐκεῖνο ἐπισημαινώμεθα ὅτι πίστιν ἑτέραν παρὰ τὴν ἐκτεθεῖσαν ἐν τῆι Νικαέων καὶ βεβαιωθεῖσαν ἐνταῦθα τὸ πρότερον ἐξέθεντο οἱ ταῦτα εἰπόντες*, as John the notary summarized Eutyches' testimony.

[31] *ACO* II.1.1, 83:15–17 (I.84).

[32] The request is revealed in Flavian's subsequent appeal: *ACO* II.2, 77–9. The fact that Flavian could compose a lengthy letter at the conclusion to the first session renders suspect the later claims that he had died as a direct result of the violent blows allegedly inflicted upon him at this point—see also: H. Chadwick (1955), 'The Exile and Death of Flavian of Constantinople: A Prologue to the Council of Chalcedon', *JTS* n.s. 6, 17–34.

threatened to offer a different idea of 'Nicaea', Dioscorus orchestrated pious interruptions to provide an appropriate 'spin' on the material. For instance, when the council reached the point where the text of the Formula had been recited, Eustathius of Berytus (a prominent ally of Dioscorus) interjected to explain that 'some of the things that he [Cyril] wrote were disputed in his lifetime by those who did not understand correctly what he had put so well',[33] and that the Formula should be read in the light of Cyril's letters to Acacius, Valerian, and Succensus, and of his *Anathemas*.[34] In this way, the inconvenient truth of Cyril's 'moderate' writings could be overcome by granting interpretive priority to his more strongly miaphysite ones. The imposition of a particular construal of Nicaea and Ephesus also required the imposition of a 'select Cyril'.

The delicacy of Dioscorus' task was briefly exposed in an exchange with a delegation of Eutyches' monastic supporters. Dioscorus explained that, in order to show themselves orthodox, the monks must make a clear statement of their faith.[35] The monks replied by parroting the standard cypher of orthodoxy—that they affirmed the faith of Nicaea and Ephesus. Dioscorus had to ensure, however, that Flavian and Eusebius could not exploit the same cypher to demonstrate their own orthodoxy, and so he asked the monks a further question: 'regarding the coming of the Saviour in the flesh, do you believe the same as the blessed Athanasius, the blessed Cyril, the blessed Gregory, and all the orthodox bishops?'[36] The monks, perhaps confused or daunted by the question, simply repeated their safe formula: 'we believe the same as the holy fathers who met at Nicaea and those assembled here'.[37] Rather than open a potentially damaging theological debate, Dioscorus instead referred them to Eutyches' plaint: 'Eutyches has sent a document. Do you agree with what he has written? Do you follow his faith?'[38] Significantly, only when the monks had made this further affirmation could Juvenal pronounce that 'they profess the orthodox faith defined at Nicaea and confirmed at Ephesus'.[39] This episode reveals, then, that the cypher 'Nicaea and Ephesus'

[33] *ACO* II.1.1, 112:13–14 (I.261): *τινὰ τῶν παρ᾽ αὐτοῦ συγγραφέντων ἐν τῆι αὐτοῦ ζωῆι παρὰ τῶν οὐκ ὀρθῶς τὰ καλῶς εἰρημένα νενοηκότων* [...].

[34] *ACO* II.1.1, 112:21–3 (I.261). The council regarded the *Anathemas* as the authoritative expression of Cyril's doctrine: cf. Flemming, *Akten*, 147:35 ff.; Perry, *Ephesus*, 356–61.

[35] *ACO* II.1.1, 188:21–4 (I.889).

[36] *ACO* II.1.1, 188:29–31 (I.891): *Περὶ τῆς ἐνσάρκου τοῦ σωτῆρος παρουσίας οὕτω φρονεῖτε ὡς ὁ μακάριος Ἀθανάσιος καὶ ὁ μακάριος Κύριλλος καὶ ὁ μακάριος Γρηγόριος καὶ πάντες οἱ ὀρθόδοξοι ἐπίσκοποι.*

[37] *ACO* II.1.1, 188:32–3 (I.892): *Πάντες οὕτω φρονοῦμεν καὶ ὡς οἱ ἐν Νικαίαι συνελθόντες καὶ οἱ ἐνταῦθα συνειλεγμένοι ἅγιοι πατέρες.*

[38] *ACO* II.1.1, 188:34–6 (I.893): *Ἐπιδέδωκε λίβελλον ὁ εὐλαβέστατος πρεσβύτερος καὶ ἀρχιμανδρίτης Εὐτυχής· πείθεσθε οἷς ἔγραψεν ἐκεῖνος; καὶ ἀκολουθεῖτε τῆι πίστει αὐτοῦ.*

[39] *ACO* II.1.1, 188:43–189:2 (I.899): *Ἀκόλουθόν ἐστιν οὕτως αὐτοὺς τὴν ὀρθόδοξον ὁμολογοῦντας πίστιν τήν τε ἐν Νικαίαι ἐκτεθεῖσαν καὶ ἐν Ἐφέσωι βεβαιωθεῖσαν μετέχειν καὶ τῆς ἁγίας κοινωνίας καὶ τῶν οἰκείων βαθμῶν.*

remained vulnerable to diverse readings, and that its authoritative interpretation had to be tightly controlled and guarded.

With the Home Synod's proceedings duly examined, Dioscorus could proceed formally to confirm the Nicene faith as Theodosius had articulated it. Eutyches' doctrine was thus declared by the council as in harmony with 'the definition of faith of the council of Nicaea, and the acts of the previous great and holy council at Ephesus'.[40] Then, in another expression of the second Ephesine council's perfect continuity with the first, the full record of the session of 22 July 431 was read. Indeed, by having the text of the Nicene Creed received via its inclusion in Cyril's *acta*, Dioscorus further emphasized the inseparability of the Creed from its Ephesine confirmation. Crucially, of course, citing the 22 July proceedings allowed the Creed to be read in the context of the Ephesine condemnation of 'Nestorian' additions to Nicaea, which was precisely how Flavian and Eusebius' actions at the Home Synod were now being construed. Dioscorus then reiterated but subtly paraphrased the decree, both universalizing its scope and directing the force of its prohibition against any statement composed in addition to (rather than just contrary to) the Nicene Creed.[41] On this basis, then, Flavian and Eusebius were formally condemned, and the authentic Nicene faith triumphantly reaffirmed. Subsequent sessions of Ephesus II condemned all the other major 'Nestorian' bishops on the same basis. Theodoret and Domnus, for instance, were depicted as those who 'had the audacity to draw up a Creed, according to their own fancy, without the slightest regard for the synod…which has clearly forbidden anyone to presume to write, expound, or compose any formula of faith other than that of the holy and blessed fathers'.[42]

The scale of Dioscorus' achievement at Ephesus II should not be underestimated. He had succeeded not only in vanquishing his Antiochene foes politically but in establishing as illegitimate their entire construal of the Nicene faith. With the full authority of an oecumenical council, and with the full support of the emperor, Dioscorus had dramatically remodelled the reception of Ephesus I, ruling out the Antiochene trajectory that had found in the Formula of 433 the means to propound a strongly dyophysite Christology as orthodox, and reorienting the legacy of Cyril's council around the textual record of 22 July. In doing so, he had given the commonplace shibboleth of 'no additions to Nicaea' sharp conciliar teeth: for now, via an appeal to the Ephesine decree, *any* doctrine deemed to have added to the Nicene Creed could be ruled not only as inconsistent with Ephesus I but as coming under its

[40] *ACO* II.1.1, 182:11–14 (I.884.1): *Ἐν τῶι αὐτὸν συνεχῶς κατατίθεσθαι ὡς ἀκολουθεῖ τῆι ἐκθέσει τῆς πίστεως τῆς ἐν Νικαίαι συνόδου καὶ τοῖς ἐν Ἐφέσωι πραχθεῖσι τῆι προτέραι μεγάληι καὶ ἁγίαι συνόδωι ὀρθοδοξότατον ἐν οἷς ἀπεφθέγξατο, κατείληφα.*

[41] *ACO* II.1.1, 189:37–190:6 (I.943); cf. *ACO* II.1.1, 191:9–28 (I.962).

[42] Flemming, *Akten*, 87:40–5; Perry, *Ephesus*, 212.

direct condemnation. Indeed, in shaping the 22 July proceedings into a weapon against Antiochene theology, Dioscorus had completed the task begun by his predecessor Cyril more than a decade before. It is highly unlikely, moreover, that Dioscorus' opponents had seen his strategy coming, for, as we have argued, the 22 July session remained largely unknown outside Cyril's most passionate supporters. Finally, this radical shift in the idea of 'Nicaea' had been achieved through the most ardent reaffirmation of the unchangeable and inviolable nature of the Nicene faith: 'Nicaea' had been creatively reimagined precisely by being conservatively restated.

The contribution of Ephesus II to the idea of 'Nicaea' was also significant in conciliar terms, firstly by further eliding the councils of Nicaea and Ephesus I, and secondly by making its own activity a necessary part of the authentic expression of the one Nicene faith.

Firstly, then, it was consistently emphasized at Ephesus II that the fathers of Nicaea and Ephesus 'were in such agreement with each other in their confession that there was absolutely no difference in their opinions or definitions',[43] and that 'even though one speaks of two councils, they relate to one faith'.[44] It is this one faith of 'Nicaea and Ephesus' that, the gathered bishops exclaim, saves the world.[45] Indeed, the Ephesine decree's anathematization of any modification to Nicaea was formally extended by Dioscorus to cover Ephesus as well: 'if anyone questions or scrutinizes or revises the proceedings or the decrees of the fathers who met at Nicaea *or convened here*, let him be anathema'.[46] Once again, a pneumatological understanding of conciliar activity undergirded this point: since at Ephesus 'the Holy Spirit sat together with the fathers…and decreed what they decreed, whoever revises those decrees rejects the grace of the Spirit'.[47] It is commonly argued that the most fervent ('Monophysite') supporters of Nicaea were those most opposed to the authority of any subsequent councils, yet in fact precisely the opposite was true: for Dioscorus, the unique authority and sole sufficiency of Nicaea could only be truly secured, and the authentic faith of Nicaea only be fully affirmed, through

[43] *ACO* II.1.1, 82:12–16 (I.79): *τοσοῦτον αὐτοῖς εὐσεβείας μέλει καὶ τοῦ χρῆναι τηρεῖσθαι διηνεκῶς ἀρραγῆ καὶ ἀσάλευτα τὰ ἐκτεθέντα περὶ τῆς ὀρθοδόξου θρησκείας ἡμῶν πρώην μὲν παρὰ τῶν ἐν Νικαίαι συνελθόντων μακαριωτάτων πατέρων, βεβαιωθέντα δὲ ἔναγχος παρὰ τῶν ἐν ταύτηι τῆι πόλει συναγηγερμένων, οἳ τοσοῦτον ἑαυτοῖς ὡμολόγησάν τε καὶ συνηνέχθησαν, ὡς μηδὲν παντελῶς φρονῆσαι ἢ ὁρίσαι τὸ διάφορον.*

[44] *ACO* II.1.1, 89:1–2 (I.141): *Εἰ καὶ δύο λέγονται σύνοδοι, ἀλλ' εἰς μίαν συντείνουσιν πίστιν.*

[45] *ACO* II.1.1, 88:24 (I.137).

[46] *ACO* II.1.1, 89:6–8 (I.143): *εἴ τις παρὰ τὰ πεπραγμένα ἢ παρὰ τὰ δεδογμένα τοῖς πατράσιν τοῖς τε ἐν Νικαίαι συνελθοῦσιν καὶ τοῖς ἐνταῦθα συνειλεγμένοις ἢ ζητεῖ ἢ πολυπραγμονεῖ ἢ ἀνασκευάζει, ἀνάθεμα ἔστω.*

[47] *ACO* II.1.1, 89:14–16 (I.145): *εἰ τοίνυν τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον συνήδρευσεν μετὰ τῶν πατέρων, ὥσπερ οὖν καὶ συνήδρευσεν, καὶ ἐτύπωσεν τὰ τετυπωμένα, ὁ ἀνασκευάζων αὐτὰ τὴν τοῦ πνεύματος ἀθετεῖ χάριν.*

its confirmation at Ephesus I.[48] Paradoxically, it was Dioscorus' very desire to protect the 'monopoly' of Nicaea that made him a passionate conciliarist.

Once unleashed, however, this conciliar logic could not be limited solely to Ephesus I. With regard to the second point above, then, beneath all the affirmations of the unique and inviolable faith of 'Nicaea and Ephesus' the *acta* reveal a clear intention to bring Ephesus II itself under Nicaea's sacred canopy. Thus, at several points, the conciliar procedure self-consciously echoed that of Ephesus I. The final session of Ephesus II, for instance, concluded with the formal affirmation of Dioscorus' letters to Domnus as concordant with the Nicene faith, and those of Domnus as contrary to it, just as Ephesus I had treated Cyril and Nestorius' letters.[49] The new 'Cyril' was adding his own writings to those of his illustrious predecessor as authoritative interpretations of the Nicene faith. By retracing and reapplying the work of Cyril's council in the present, Dioscorus' council became inextricably bound up with it (and so with the Nicene council as well). The orchestrated cries of the gathered bishops reinforce this repeatedly: 'Dioscorus and Cyril have one faith!',[50] 'Dioscorus and Cyril have confirmed the faith of the fathers!'[51]

As in Cyril's earlier Ephesine *acta*, moreover, it was pneumatology that acted as the glue unifying past and present conciliar activity: the bishops of Ephesus II spoke of having been 'assembled according to the operation of the Holy Spirit',[52] described their verdicts as being 'pronounced by God through the holy council',[53] and acclaimed Dioscorus' words as 'the sayings of the Holy Spirit…the fathers live through you!'[54] Dioscorus similarly applauded the cries of the synod: '[such words] you do not shout of yourselves alone, but it is the Holy Spirit who exclaims in you!'[55] The tropes associated with Nicaea's unique status, in other words, were now being further democratized to encompass Ephesus II as well as Ephesus I. Eutyches, similarly, was judged truly Nicene because he affirmed all three councils: 'the holy council at Nicaea, and the one

[48] *Contra* Sieben, *Konzilsidee,* 247–50.

[49] Flemming, *Akten*, 143:44–5, 147:35–6; Perry, *Ephesus*, 351–2, 356–7.

[50] *ACO* II.1.1, 101:6–7 (I.226): *Διόσκορος καὶ Κύριλλος μίαν πίστιν ἔχουσιν.*

[51] Flemming, *Akten*, 57:7–8; Perry, *Ephesus*, 126.

[52] *ACO* II.3.1, 174:28–30 (I.884.13; preserved in Latin): ex oblatis libellis a reverentissimo Eutyche presbytero et archimandrite nunc sancto congregato conventui secundum sancti spiritus operationem […]; and again at Flemming, *Akten*, 91:5–6; Perry, *Ephesus*, 217.

[53] *ACO* II.3.1, 179:2 (I.884.36; preserved in Latin): hoc enim decretum a deo prolatum est per sanctum concilium.

[54] *ACO* II.1.1, 89:20–1 (I.148): *Αὗται αἱ φωναὶ πνεύματος ἁγίου* […] *διὰ σοῦ ζῶσιν οἱ πατέρες. τῶι φύλακι τῆς πίστεως*. The ascription of acclamations to the whole synod was itself a way of demonstrating its miraculous Spirit-guided consensus, just as the council's exposure of deceit, disagreement, and disorder in the Home Synod's proceedings was intended to prove that the Spirit could not have been present.

[55] Flemming, *Akten*, 57:10–12; Perry, *Ephesus*, 126.

that both formerly, and now, is assembled here by the grace of God'.[56] The presbyter Pelagius' plaint made this point yet more explicitly, construing Ephesus II not merely as the latest authoritative expression of the Nicene faith, but as its final one:

> God has already assembled you here twice; but this third oecumenical synod, placed at the termination of ages, will be, I opine, the last of all the councils convoked by the Holy Spirit. That is the reason why the Holy Spirit, who is the perfecter of all, has assembled it with special care, because it is the last; wishing to fulfil here again: 'by the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established'. Whoever, then, will not yield himself to what the Holy Spirit shall decide, by your means and mediation, let him be regarded as a heathen and a publican; let him, in fact, be excommunicated. [...] For, if two in number, or three persons, bearing witness, are to be believed, according to the law and the divine Scripture, when three synods pronounce, by the help of the Trinity—that is to say, when the Trinity itself pronounces, through their mediation—who would venture to dispute your judgements by alleging that they are not with justice determined?[57]

The Trinity are three, so too are the councils: with Ephesus II, the conciliar task was completed. Theodosius took a similarly definite line in his formal ratification of Ephesus II. He described how, just as the bishops had 'confirmed and consolidated' the faith of Nicaea at Ephesus I against Nestorius, so they had now done so again in response to the revival of the Nestorian heresy, finally eradicating that pernicious seed of error at its very roots.[58] The true faith had thereby not merely been restored, but 'truly and powerfully strengthened'.[59] Tellingly, Theodosius focused upon the council's reaffirmation of the Ephesine decree, that 'none should dare by any means, not even partially, to deprave the definition of the 318 bishops who assembled at Nicaea, nor to presume to add to or to subtract anything from it'.[60]

Most striking of all was the form in which Theodosius ordered subscription to the work of the council: 'this our God-loving law, the creed of our holy faith, and the definition of the two synods aforementioned, as well as this, that nobody shall add to it, even one word, or shall subtract from it, and nobody shall presume to interpret it, seeing that it is its own expositor and obvious to everybody'.[61] The Nicene Creed, in other words, was now to be read in

[56] *ACO* II.3.1, 186:25–7 (I.884.85; preserved in Latin): et inveniens eum recte sapere et unitum tam sancto Nicaeno concilio quam ei quod pridem hic et nunc gratia dei collectum est [...].

[57] Flemming, *Akten*, 85:36–87:2; Perry, *Ephesus*, 208–9.

[58] Flemming, *Akten*, 25:6ff.; Perry, *Ephesus*, 364–6.

[59] Flemming, *Akten*, 153:22–5; Perry, *Ephesus*, 366.

[60] Flemming, *Akten*, 153:29–33; Perry, *Ephesus*, 367.

[61] Flemming, *Akten*, 153:36–41; Perry, *Ephesus*, 369; the construal was repeated in Dioscorus' encyclical letter (Flemming, *Akten*, 155:20ff.; Perry, *Ephesus*, 373–5). It was precisely because the meaning of Nicaea was *not* 'obvious to everyone' that such a carefully arranged construal had to be imposed as alone legitimate.

the context of the Ephesine decree, and the 'definition' of Ephesus I and Ephesus II. To confess Nicaea correctly, then, one had to acknowledge both the absolute sufficiency of the Creed, and its authoritative interpretation at both councils of Ephesus. Having thus established the true faith, Theodosius sought to ensure that it was fixed for all time—the settlement was, he insisted, 'final, as that which has been accomplished by the co-operation of the Holy Spirit'.[62]

This new official idea of 'Nicaea', confirmed by an oecumenical council and imposed by the emperor, was firmly upheld until Theodosius' sudden death in July 450. Dioscorus, like his predecessor Cyril, ensured that the conciliar *acta* were widely circulated: within a year even the aged Nestorius, languishing in exile, was able to quote from a copy.[63] Leo's campaign of letters against Ephesus II, claiming that the Nicene (actually Serdican) canons had been broken, and that the faith of Nicaea had been transgressed, fell on resolutely deaf ears.[64] Indeed, when Theodosius finally deigned to pen Leo a reply, it was firmly to reiterate that the faith had now been settled by the verdict of the recent holy council, which had duly followed the decisions of Nicaea and Ephesus I:

> it is clear without a doubt that we have neither defined nor decreed nor understood anything beyond the faith of the fathers or the divine dogmas or definitions of the most reverend [bishops] who gathered in the Nicene city under Constantine of divine memory, or a little while ago in Ephesus under our decree.[65]

It appeared to most as though the controversy over the idea of 'Nicaea' had, after twenty years, finally been laid to rest.

To conclude, Ephesus II represented a decisive point in the ongoing struggle over 'Nicaea'. By the late 440s, 'Nicaea' had become such a malleable cypher of

[62] Flemming, *Akten*, 155:16–18; Perry, *Ephesus*, 370 (from the emperor's reiteration of his edict to Juvenal).

[63] Cf. Nestorius, *Liber* (Bedjan, 471 ff.; Hodgson/Driver, 343 ff.). Ironically, Nestorius entirely agreed with the self-presentation of Ephesus II as the repetition and reapplication of Ephesus I—only for him it was a second 'council of heretics' and a second betrayal of the faith of Nicaea, in which the tyrannous Dioscorus had succeeded the tyrannous Cyril, and the noble victim Nestorius had been replaced by the noble victim Flavian.

[64] The Nicene canons broken: Leo, *Epp.* 43, 44; the Nicene faith transgressed: Leo, *Ep.* 60; cf. more generally: Leo, *Epp.* 45–59. Leo insisted that his own doctrine was entirely in accord with the Creed of Nicaea (*Ep.* 54). On Leo's strategy in the aftermath of Ephesus II, see S. Wessel (2012), *Leo the Great and the Spiritual Rebuilding of a Universal Rome* (Leiden: Brill), 259–83; on the range of accusations levelled against Ephesus II, see M. S. Smith (2012), 'A Robbers' Den? A Fresh Look at the Second Council of Ephesus, AD 449', *SP* 52, 295–304.

[65] Leo, *Ep.* 63 (*ACO* II.3.1, 16:18–22): ex quibus sine dubitatione manifestum est nihil nos praetor paternam fidem, aut dogmata divina, vel definitiones reverendissimorum, qui tam sub divae memoriae Constantino in Nicaea civitate, quam dudom nostro praecepto in Epheso congregate sunt, definisse, aut decrevisse, aut intellexisse; cf. Wessel, *Leo*, 267. Theodosius dispatched three letters in response to Leo's requests—Leo, *Ep.* 62 to Leo directly, *Ep.* 63 to Galla Placidia, and *Ep.* 64 to Eudoxia.

orthodoxy that it threatened to render ecclesial pronouncements at best meaningless, and at worst ludicrous: in upholding Nicaea and anathematizing its transgressors, the Home Synod had condemned Eutyches and affirmed Flavian, whilst Ephesus II had exonerated Eutyches and condemned Flavian! Theodosius, not unwisely, recognized that the authentic idea of 'Nicaea' was thus better imposed than argued for, and more convincingly established on the pages of carefully tailored *acta* than in the confused hubbub of conciliar debate. And yet, to characterize Ephesus II as a victory for imperial coercion alone is considerably to underestimate its contribution. The foregoing analysis has identified several significant elements to this Ephesine achievement.

Firstly, the official reception of Ephesus I was radically reoriented around its 22 July *acta*, closing off the Antiochene strategy of reading Cyril's council through the Formula of 433 while fashioning the (hitherto little-known) 'Canon 7' into a powerful weapon against any theological statements deemed to be an addition to the Nicene Creed.

Secondly, precisely by presenting its activity as the mere recapitulation and reapplication of the all-sufficient decrees of Nicaea and Ephesus I, Ephesus II established its own authoritative conciliar status: the authentic faith of 'Nicaea' could now properly be confessed only through the recognition of the three councils of 325, 431, and 449. In this way, the fiercest defenders of Nicaea's unique status were paradoxically revealed as those most committed to the authority of subsequent councils—for, they claimed, it was in those councils that the Holy Spirit guided the assembled bishops to present the unchanging faith of Nicaea afresh. This was no 'mere repetition' of Nicaea (for all recognized that simply repeating the syllables of the Creed uninterpreted was inadequate), but rather the 'rejuvenating reception' of the Nicene faith.

Thirdly, the articulation of this idea of 'Nicaea' was primarily achieved through the careful layering of textual authorities in written conciliar *acta*. By quoting the Nicene Creed within its citation from the proceedings of Ephesus I, Dioscorus was able to demonstrate his council's perfect fidelity to the Nicene tradition, while ensuring that the Creed was 'read' in a particular textual setting. The true meaning of the Creed was no longer to be discovered through interpreting what its words actually said, but by positioning how the text as a whole was read. In this way, the most self-consciously 'conservative' presentation of the faith of Nicaea could be, in fact, the means for the most dramatic remoulding of its identity: Ephesus II was the council that simultaneously asserted 'Canon 7' against any additions to Nicaea, and radically transformed that faith into a hard-line Cyrillianism based on the *Anathemas*!

The idea of 'Nicaea', then, had again shown itself to be both the source of dispute and the means by which that dispute could be overcome. In one sense, indeed, the solution fashioned by Ephesus II was *too* powerful, for in construing the chief legacy of Ephesus I as the prohibition of any additions to Nicaea, and its own activity as the final statement of the Nicene faith, it threatened to

inhibit the very discursive creativity that had brought it to birth, and to fix in amber the idea of 'Nicaea' that it had itself so dynamically re-expressed. The death of Theodosius ensured that Dioscorus' enemies would have a chance to refute, at a new oecumenical council, the idea of 'Nicaea' that Ephesus II had established—their profound difficulty in doing so is perhaps the greatest testimony to the success of the 'Robber Synod'.

7

The Idea of Nicaea at Chalcedon (451)

When, in May 451, the emperor Marcian issued the formal summons for a fresh oecumenical council, it was entirely fitting that he commanded the bishops to convene in Nicaea.[1] For, Marcian explained, the Second Council of Nicaea had been called in order that 'our true faith may be recognized more clearly for all time, so that henceforth there can be no doubting or disagreement'.[2] And since the primary cause and focus of that 'doubting and disagreement' was the contested character of the Nicene faith, Marcian recognized that only by returning (both geographically and theologically) to Nicaea could his desire for a final resolution be achieved. The fact that military pressures subsequently necessitated a change of location to Chalcedon has tended to obscure the centrality of Nicaea in Marcian's thought.[3]

Indeed, as we shall see, Marcian's intended solution to the problem of 'Nicaea' was remarkably daring. Rather than simply model the activity of his council on Ephesus I (as Ephesus II had done), Marcian sought to repeat—and *complete*—the work of Nicaea itself.[4] From the outset, Marcian made it clear that, like his great predecessor, he would attend the proceedings in person,[5] and, when he did arrive in majesty with Pulcheria at the council's climactic sixth session, the imperial couple were met with (no doubt carefully orchestrated) shouts of episcopal acclamation: 'Marcian the new Constantine! Pulcheria the new Helena!'[6] Similarly, the council was soon depicted as having 636 bishops in attendance, exactly double that of Nicaea.[7]

[1] See Marcian's initial summons: *ACO* II.1.1, 27:22–8:9.

[2] *ACO* II.1.1, 27:31–2: *τὴν ἀληθῆ πίστιν ἡμῶν εἰς ἅπαντα χρόνον σαφέστερον ἐπιγνωσθῆναι, ὥστε τοῦ λοιποῦ μηδεμίαν δύνασθαι εἶναι ἀμφιβολίαν ἤτοι διχόνοιαν.*

[3] For the order of relocation: *ACO* II.1.1, 30. Some bishops had already assembled at Nicaea before the change of venue: *ACO* II.1.2, 98:7–8 (IV.9.37). Anti-Chalcedonian writers later interpreted this as an act of divine providence, ensuring that the blessed city of Nicaea would not become the meeting-place of rebels (Ps.-Zach., *H.E.* III.1).

[4] Cf. R. M. Price and M. Gaddis (eds) (2005), *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press), I, 90.

[5] *ACO* II.1.1, 28:4–6.

[6] *ACO* II.1.2, 155:25–6 (VI.11): *Μαρκιανὸς νέος Κωνσταντῖνος. Πουλχερία νέα Ἑλένη.*

[7] E. Honigmann (1942–3), 'The Original Lists of the Members of the Council of Nicaea, the Robber Synod and the Council of Chalcedon', *Byz* 16, 46.

By creatively drawing upon the Nicene tradition in this way, Marcian could offer a bold new solution to the problem of 'Nicaea': a new Nicene 'Definition' promulgated by a second Nicene council. This agenda, of course, trangressed the inherited assumptions (at least since 431) regarding the proper scope of conciliar activity—councils may retrospectively *recognize* particular documents as orthodox expositions of Nicaea (such as the *Second Letter* of Cyril at Ephesus I), but did not themselves *compose* fresh statements of faith, lest they appear to innovate, or imply Nicaea's inadequacy. It is unsurprising, then, that Marcian's plans for his oecumenical council would come to meet with sustained episcopal resistance.

THE PROBLEMATIC FLEXIBILITY OF NICAEA BY 451

Before examining Marcian's strategy directly, it is necessary first to recognize the sheer scale of the challenge that the emperor faced in forging a new 'Nicene' settlement. The written record of the Chalcedonian proceedings, indeed, repeatedly reveals how problematic the flexibility of 'Nicaea' as a cypher of orthodoxy had become by 451.

A particularly telling example of this phenomenon is found in Chalcedon's first session. Marcian's determination to reverse the work of Ephesus II placed many of the assembled bishops in a rather embarrassing predicament—namely, that they had been complicit in the very decisions that were now to be condemned.[8] Indeed, since the first session of Chalcedon was devoted to the lengthy reading of the proceedings of Ephesus II, the problem was still more acute, for the bishops were confronted by the apparently authoritative record of an inconvenient past—one that they now sought in every way to deny. It is for this reason that Chalcedon's first session was replete with interruptions, as the implicated bishops pleaded every excuse possible to evade responsibility for the events of August 449: the *acta* were inaccurate,[9] there was physical coercion from monks and soldiers,[10] Dioscorus behaved tyrannously,[11] there was great confusion and tumult,[12] and so on. The most

[8] Some 119 bishops present at the first session of Chalcedon had been present at the first session of Ephesus II: Honigmann, 'Original Lists', 40.

[9] *ACO* II.1.1, 89: 22–3 (I.149). Note that, when referencing the Chalcedonian material in the footnotes to this section, the numeration of the Greek *acta* is followed. This results in occasional discrepancies with the chronological order of the sessions—the 'second' session (10 October), for instance, is given as Session III in the Greek *acta*.

[10] *ACO* II.1.1, 75:10–15 (I.54).

[11] *ACO* II.1.1, 180:14–28 (I.858).

[12] *ACO* II.1.1, 93:17–39 (I.176). The notorious reputation of the 'latrocinium' is thus in part attributable to the exertions of bishops complicit in its decisions subsequently to shift the blame at Chalcedon.

desperate bishops, bereft of any meaningful defence, simply acknowledged that they had sinned.[13]

The bishops in the most unenviable situation, however, were those who had been present not only at Ephesus II but also at the Constantinopolitan Home Synod the year before. For these men were on record as having pronounced Eutyches' doctrine as contrary to Nicaea in 448, and as concordant with Nicaea in 449—and were expected at Chalcedon to declare it as contrary to Nicaea once again. Moreover, since the first session of Ephesus II had consisted of the reading of the Home Synod's proceedings, they were presented at Chalcedon not only with their complicity in the decisions of Ephesus but with the record of their excuses, at Ephesus, for their behaviour at Constantinople!

Crucially, however, the tortuous attempts of these bishops to justify their apparently inconsistent doctrinal affirmations provide more than a mere study in episcopal squirming. For, in seeking to locate a golden thread of consistency amidst their various conciliar contributions, they reached for the convenient cypher of their fidelity to 'Nicaea'. Indeed, 'Nicaea' proved sufficiently flexible to encompass the wide variety of theological positions that these bishops had successively adopted: it was the perfect fig leaf to shroud their contradictions and so to hide their blushes. Aetherichus of Smyrna offers the clearest example of this strategy, for, whilst some of his remarks appear confused or even incoherent (leading Nestorius to label him a 'rustic, unable to understand evident things'[14]), there is an underlying shrewdness evident in his various attempts to give an account of his orthodoxy.

Aetherichus is recorded in the Constantinopolitan Home Synod proceedings at two points, both of which were read out at Ephesus II, and then again (as part of the Ephesine *acta*) at Chalcedon. His first contribution came as a succession of bishops affirmed Flavian's (controversial) construal of the Nicene faith, as interpreted through the Formula of Reunion. Aetherichus was the fourth bishop to signal his agreement with Flavian's statement, and he simply stated 'I too agree and concur as the fathers here present, both previously, now, in the future and in the age to come'.[15] It is a rather bare and stereotyped remark, signalling assent but without elaboration. It is quite possible that, at this stage, Aetherichus was not aware of the Christological nuances of Flavian's statement, and was content simply to keep proceedings moving. Nonetheless, in the hostile context of Ephesus II, even this bland affirmation would need explaining.

[13] *ACO* II.1.1, 94:20–3 (I.184).

[14] Nestorius, *Liber* (Bedjan, 488; Hodgson/Driver, 355–6); the Syriac gives 'Atticus', a transcription error.

[15] *ACO* II.1.1, 118:20–2 (I.308): *Καθὼς οἱ πατέρες οἱ παρόντες συνέθεντο, κἀγὼ συναινῶ καὶ συντίθεμαι καὶ πρὸ τούτου καὶ νῦν καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα καὶ εἰς τὸν μέλλοντα αἰῶνα.*

Aetherichus' second contribution came at the conclusion to the Home Synod, in the list of signatories to Eutyches' deposition. Again, Aetherichus was one of the first bishops to give his assent, but this time he broke with the standard formula used by the bishops before him ('I have given my sentence and signed'), and offered a more expansive statement: 'If anyone holds views on the faith that differ from the definitions of the entire holy council at Nicaea, let him be anathema'.[16] This extra gloss on Eutyches' condemnation was likely given as an implicit refutation of the archimandrite's repeated claims to be himself faithful to Nicaea. Indeed, Aetherichus may here have been seeking to suggest that Flavian's dyophysite formula was not an addition to Nicaea but was rather a fuller expression of the Nicene faith, and so was in this sense included within the 'entire' meaning of the council of 325.

When, however, Aetherichus heard the first of his statements (supporting Flavian's formula) read back at Ephesus II, he immediately interrupted: 'I didn't say that'.[17] Dioscorus then initiated a prolonged exchange, exploiting Aetherichus' embarrassment in order to put on record that the proceedings of the Home Synod were unreliable.[18] Aetherichus was under considerable pressure here, since Dioscorus' notary John had moments earlier given the council's 'official line' on Flavian's statement of faith: 'those who speak in this way expound a different creed from that issued at Nicaea and confirmed at the earlier council here'.[19] When coupled with Dioscorus' threatening observation 'there are many Nestoriuses',[20] it is clear that those bishops who had affirmed Flavian's doctrine in 448 were being depicted as complicit in a 'Nestorian' addition to the Nicene faith. Aetherichus' attempt to explain his earlier position is thus significant:

> I arrived post-haste at Constantinople, and joined the hearers, and then heard this very same monk together with them. He said, 'Sir, sign here'. I said, 'Let us for the time being simply look on, for we have heard certain statements of his'. He then said, 'Expound the faith'. I said, 'I am not able to do so. I certainly know it, but I cannot express it, except to say: If anyone holds different beliefs from the 318 and those at Ephesus, let him be anathema, both now and in the age to come'.[21]

[16] *ACO* II.1.1, 145:27–9 (I.552.8): *εἴ τις ἄλλο φρονεῖ ἕνεκεν τῆς πίστεως ἔξωθεν τῶν ὁρισθέντων παρὰ πάσης τῆς ἁγίας συνόδου τῆς κατὰ Νίκαιαν, ἀνάθεμα ἔστω.*

[17] *ACO* II.1.1, 118:23 (I.309): *Ἐγὼ ταῦτα οὐκ εἶπον.*

[18] *ACO* II.1.1, 118:24–119:14 (I.310–22).

[19] *ACO* II.1.1, 118:11–13 (I.305): *Ἐκ τῶν ἀναγινωσκομένων ἐκεῖνο ἐπισημαινώμεθα ὅτι πίστιν ἑτέραν παρὰ τὴν ἐκτεθεῖσαν ἐν τῆι Νικαέων καὶ βεβαιωθεῖσαν ἐνταῦθα τὸ πρότερον ἐξέθεντο οἱ ταῦτα εἰπόντες.*

[20] *ACO* II.1.1, 118:10 (I.304): *τί μεμφόμεθα Νεστορίωι μόνωι; πολλοὶ Νεστόριοί εἰσιν.*

[21] *ACO* II.1.1, 118:28–119:2 (I.313): *Αἰφνιδίως ἐπεισῆλθον ἐν Κωνσταντινουπόλει, προσέσχον δὲ τοῖς ἀκροαταῖς, εἶτα τοῦτον αὐτὸν τὸν μονάζοντα μετ᾽ αὐτῶν, λέγει· κύρι, ὑπόγραψον. λέγω κἀγώ· τέως κἂν ἄφες ἴδωμεν· ἐπηκούσαμεν αὐτοῦ φανερά τινα. μετὰ ταῦτα λέγει· ἔκθου. ἐγὼ λέγω· ἐκθέσθαι οὐ δύναμαι. ἀληθῶς μὲν οἶδα, ἀλλ᾽ οὐ δύναμαι εἰπεῖν, πλὴν λέγω· εἴ τις οὐ πιστεύει καθὼς οἱ τριακόσιοι δέκα καὶ ὀκτὼ καὶ οἱ ἐν Ἐφέσωι, ἀνάθεμα ἔστω καὶ ὧδε καὶ εἰς ἐκεῖνον τὸν μέλλοντα αἰῶνα.*

Aetherichus' perturbation has made his statement here somewhat confused. The subject of the second sentence is clearly Flavian, not the 'monk' (i.e. Eutyches) of the previous remark. Aetherichus' reference to himself as one of the 'hearers' of the Synod is also unusual, perhaps reflecting an attempt to minimize the degree of his complicity in its decisions. Most notably, the reference to Flavian's command that he *sign* suggests that Aetherichus had jumped the gun, giving the response intended to excuse his subsequent signature condemning Eutyches, rather than his initial statement in support of Flavian's confession of faith.[22] Indeed, it is probably the issue of Nicaea that forged the conceptual link in Aetherichus' mind: having just heard from Dioscorus' notary John that those following Flavian were to be regarded as holding views contrary to Nicaea, he now sought to explain how he was, in fact, faithful to it.

Muddled in places though it is, then, Aetherichus' strategy here seems to have been to reinterpret his declaration at the Home Synod that 'if anyone holds views on the faith that differ from the definitions of the entire holy council at Nicaea, let him be anathema', so that it did not betoken support for Flavian's Christology but was rather a simple affirmation of Nicene orthodoxy. In other words, Aetherichus sought to extricate himself from his predicament by retaining his confession of 'Nicaea', but emptying it of any underlying 'Antiochene' agenda. Thus, in the hostile atmosphere of Ephesus II, Aetherichus tried to play the part of the naive follower of Nicene orthodoxy, taking refuge in the simple confession of 'the 318 and those at Ephesus', and so adopting a cypher that he hoped would be sufficiently bland to be acceptable to Dioscorus. In this way, the plasticity of 'Nicaea' was of tremendous help—for a statement that, at the Home Synod, had been used to affirm Flavian's Christology could now, with the minimum of adaptation, be reinterpreted as an innocent and non-controversial statement of orthodoxy.

Safely off the hook, Aetherichus' next contribution at Ephesus II was, along with the other bishops, to declare Eutyches as orthodox, on the basis of the monk's confession of the faith of Nicaea and Ephesus. He stated that since 'Eutyches assents to the holy council which met in Nicaea and the holy council which formerly convened here', he found him orthodox.[23] Aetherichus had now successfully identified the particular cypher that Dioscorus wished to be affirmed. In doing so, however, he had exposed the dilemma that Marcian faced at Chalcedon in seeking to establish a new Nicene orthodoxy: how could

[22] The phrase 'now and in the age to come' may be a distorted echo of Aetherichus' earlier use of 'now, and in the future, and in the age to come' in his initial statement at the Home Synod.

[23] *ACO* II.3.1, 184:7–9 (I.884.69; preserved in Latin): Repperiens deo amicissimum presbyterum eet archimandritam Eutychem consentientem sancto concilio quod in Nicaea convenit, et sanctae synodo quae hic prius collecta est et nunc fermata a sancto vestro convent [...].

'Nicaea' be a meaningful doctrinal locus if it could be used to condemn Eutyches in 448, and restore him in 449?

At Chalcedon, Aetherichus was again placed in an awkward situation, as his dialogue with Dioscorus from Ephesus II was read. He interrupted the reading of the Ephesine *acta*, stating:

> Originally I simply agreed and signed. I went off. Dioscorus the most devout bishop suddenly collared me and said, 'Why did you sign Eutyches' condemnation?' I replied, 'I signed along with all our fathers. If there is anything else, tell me'. He said, 'Why did you sign?' I said, 'I signed what they brought to me: Anathema to whoever does not believe with the 318 and as did those at Ephesus. Let him be anathema'. What they wrote after that I don't know'. I said this in front of everyone'.[24]

Aetherichus now portrayed Dioscorus as coming upon him in a sudden and threatening manner, just as he had portrayed Flavian when questioned at Ephesus II. Aetherichus' strategy here was ingenious. He sought retrospectively to depict himself as affirming the same basic orthodox cypher at both the Home Synod and at Ephesus II: that he believed 'with the 318, and as did those at Ephesus'. Aetherichus had identified the golden thread that made his various doctrinal vacillations appear entirely consistent—he had found in the affirmation of 'Nicaea and Ephesus' a construal of the faith that was unimpeachably orthodox and yet conveniently vague. Of course, a careful examination of Aetherichus' various statements exposes his deceit—his anathematization of Eutyches at the Home Synod, for instance, in fact referred to the council of Nicaea alone.

No doubt aware that Aetherichus was misrepresenting his earlier remarks, Dioscorus immediately challenged this version of events, calling upon Aetherichus to produce witnesses to support his testimony.[25] Knowing himself to be without such witnesses, Aetherichus made one final attempt to present himself as orthodox, simply stating: 'I agree with Cyril'.[26] Once again, then, we glimpse how the commonly accepted slogans of orthodoxy ('Nicaea', 'Cyril') had become the means by which one's orthodoxy could be asserted without being clarified. The difficulty at Chalcedon, of course, was that just as Aetherichus could exploit the vagueness of these slogans, so too could Eutyches and Dioscorus.

[24] *ACO* II.1.1, 119:16–21 (I.323): *Τὰ πρῶτα συνεθέμην καὶ ὑπέγραψα μόνον. ἀπῆλθον· εὐθέως ἐκολλήθη μοι Διόσκορος ὁ εὐλαβέστατος ἐπίσκοπος καὶ λέγει· διὰ τί ὑπέγραψας κατὰ Εὐτυχοῦς; λέγω· ἐγὼ ὑπέγραψα ὡς πάντες οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν· εἰ δέ ἐστίν τί ποτε ἄλλο, εἴπατέ μοι. λέγει· τί ὑπέγραψας; λέγω· ὡς προσήνεγκάν μοι, ὑπέγραψα. ἀνάθεμα, εἴ τις οὐ πιστεύει τοῖς τριακοσίοις δεκαοκτὼ καὶ ὡς οἱ ἐν Ἐφέσωι· οὗτος ἀνάθεμα ἔστω. ὕστερον τί ἔγραψαν, οὐκ οἶδα· ἐπὶ πάντων εἶπα.*

[25] *ACO* II.1.1, 119:22 (I.324).

[26] *ACO* II.1.1, 119:23 (I.325): *Ὡς Κύριλλος φρονῶ.*

Aetherichus was not the only bishop to exploit the flexibility of 'Nicaea' as a cypher of orthodoxy. Seleucus of Amaseia was similarly confronted at Ephesus II by the evidence of his assent to Flavian's doctrinal statement in 448. As well as distancing himself from his earlier remarks, he quickly rephrased his construal of the faith: 'I give my assent to that which was defined by the holy fathers at Nicaea and confirmed at Ephesus'.[27] In itself, of course, such an utterly bland statement was in no way incompatible with the kind of dyophysite Christology that Seleucus had affirmed at the Home Synod, but he recognized that this was Dioscorus' chosen slogan of orthodoxy at Ephesus II, and so shrewdly adopted it himself, demonstrating that he was theologically sound, while covering up his previous indiscretions. The problem was that these consensus cyphers in fact disguised a diverse range of mutually contradictory theologies. The very plasticity that made 'Nicaea' a refuge for the embarrassed bishops of 448, 449, and 451 was also an obstacle to the clear articulation of a new Nicene orthodoxy.

If the flexibility of 'Nicaea', then, could be effectively utilized by bishops seeking to shroud their inconsistent conciliar pronoucements, it could also be exploited by those who opposed Marcian's desire to see Ephesus II condemned and the Nicene faith freshly defined. The achievement of Ephesus II had, after all, been established on an impeccably 'Nicene' basis: the faith of 'Nicaea and Ephesus' had been confirmed, and the Ephesine decree prohibiting additions to Nicaea had been reissued against all remaining 'Nestorians'. Moreover, Ephesus II's self-presentation as *completing* the conciliar exposition of Nicaea (reasserted in Theodosius' edict issued after the council) made the task of Chalcedon more difficult still. The primary dilemma facing Marcian, then, was how the avowedly 'Nicene' Ephesus II could be demonstrated as fundamentally unfaithful to Nicaea while a new construal of the Nicene faith could be convincingly expounded (and not fall under the Ephesine decree's ban on fresh statements of faith). Indeed, the early sessions of Chalcedon reveal how the appeal to Nicaea was routinely deployed not to further Marcian's agenda, but rather to frustrate it.

From the outset of the first session, Dioscorus and his episcopal supporters took their stand firmly on the faith of Nicaea.[28] The difficulty involved in persuasively critiquing their Nicene credentials was evident from the fact that whilst Dioscorus consistently wanted to talk about the nature of the Nicene faith, Eusebius and the imperial officials kept shifting the focus back to the

[27] *ACO* II.1.1, 181:7–8 (I.864): *Συμφέρομαι καὶ συντίθεμαι τοῖς ἐν Νικαίαι ἐκτεθεῖσι παρὰ τῶν ἁγίων πατέρων, καὶ τοῖς ἐν Ἐφέσωι δὲ βεβαιωθεῖσι* [...]; cf. *ACO* II.1.1, 117:29–118:4 (I.302). Price and Gaddis, *Chalcedon*, I, 272, fn. 319 misattributes this statement to Basil of Seleucia.

[28] Until Juvenal's dramatic volte-face halfway through the first session (I.284), Dioscorus enjoyed the vocal support of the vast majority of bishops from Egypt, Illyricum, and Palestine (e.g. *ACO* I.1.1, 69:16–19 [I.27]).

violence and tyranny of Ephesus II.[29] Reiterating the construal of the Ephesine *acta*, Dioscorus and his allies portrayed themselves as the authentic interpreters of Cyril's legacy,[30] the humble followers of the Nicene fathers,[31] and the guardians of the true Nicene faith.[32] Tellingly, when Bishop Diogenes alleged that Eutyches had gone beyond the faith of Nicaea as it was authoritatively expounded in 381 (the first reference to the Constantinopolitan Creed, of which more below), the Egyptian bishops immediately interjected, 'No one admits any addition or subtraction! Confirm the work of Nicaea—the orthodox emperor has commanded this!'[33] Here again the potent legacy of Ephesus II is evident, for its reshaping of the 22 July 431 decree now meant that *any* clarification of the Nicene faith could be condemned as an impious addition to Nicaea. The hitherto uncontroversial mantra of 'no addition or subtraction' to Nicaea had, in Dioscorus' hands, been turned into a means of resisting any expression of the Nicene faith that conflicted with a hard-line Cyrillian theology.

Similarly crafty appeals to Nicaea were evident in Chalcedon's fourth session, which returned, after the trial of Dioscorus, to the question of the true character of the Nicene faith. At the end of the first session, Marcian had finally shown his hand, offering a fresh articulation of the idea of 'Nicaea' that included the *Tomus* of Leo as one of its authoritative interpreters.[34] In this way, he sought not only to anathematize Eutyches and his ilk, but to rule as illegitimate the particular reading of Ephesus I and of Cyril's writings that they espoused. We shall return to the details of Marcian's agenda below, but for the moment it is sufficient to note that, by the fourth session, the bishops were expected to affirm this new imperial construal of orthodoxy. Towards the end of that session, two distinct groups, both unreconciled to Marcian's account of the Nicene faith, came to plead their case—and both sought to demonstrate their orthodoxy precisely through fidelity to Nicaea. Just as a fresh idea of Nicaea was being propounded, in other words, so opponents of this redefinition attempted to use an appeal to 'Nicaea' as a shield against that redefinition. Moreover, the unconvincing attempts of the other bishops to refute this 'false' construal of the faith reveals that 'Nicaea' was not only an effective means to resist further doctrinal clarification, but was also a rather blunt instrument in the hands of those who sought to impose the new orthodoxy.

[29] Compare, for example, Eusebius' attack on Ephesus II (*ACO* II.1.1, 66:23–4 [I.16]), with Dioscorus' desire to focus on the nature of orthodoxy (*ACO* II.1.1, 67:29–30 [I.21]). Even when Dioscorus was formally condemned at Chalcedon's third session, it was primarily on the grounds of his corruption and oppression, rather than his doctrine (cf. Anatolius' subsequent remark: *ACO* II.1.2, 320:17–19 [V.14]).

[30] *ACO* II.1.1, 70:26–8 (I.43). [31] *ACO* II.1.1, 117:5–11 (I.299).

[32] *ACO* II.1.1, 70:32–4 (I.45), 76:30–2 (I.64), 111:30–1 (I.256).

[33] *ACO* II.1.1, 91:31–3 (I.161): *Οὐδεὶς δέχεται προσθήκην, οὐδεὶς μείωσιν. τὰ τῶν ἐν Νικαίαι κρατείτω· ὁ ὀρθόδοξος βασιλεὺς τοῦτο ἐκέλευσεν*, cf. *ACO* II.1.1, 91:36–92.2 (I.163).

[34] *ACO* II.1.1, 195:24–196:6 (I.1072).

The first group to present themselves were the remaining Egyptian bishops, now without a patriarch following Dioscorus' deposition in the previous session. They aimed to exploit this predicament in order to avoid signing up to the new imperial construal of 'Nicaea', which for them involved the unacceptable concession of recognizing Leo's *Tomus* as orthodox.[35] Tellingly, they were allowed to make their petition only once the assembled bishops had already solemnly affirmed the *Tomus* as in harmony with Nicaea.[36] The organization of the session had thus been structured to exert the maximum pressure on the Egyptian bishops to conform. In this context, then, they made the following confession of faith:

> The orthodox faith, which from the beginning has been handed down to us by our holy and inspired fathers, St Mark the evangelist, the celebrated bishop and martyr Peter, and our holy fathers Athanasius, Theophilus, and Cyril (who is among the saints), this we too preserve, this we advocate as the disciples of their confession, and this we hold, in accordance with the definitions of the 318 at Nicaea and of the most blessed Athanasius and Cyril, who is among the saints. We anathematize every heresy: those of Arius, Eunomius, Mani, Nestorius, and of those who say that the flesh of our Lord is from heaven and not from the holy Virgin Mary Theotokos, being like us in all things except sin—and in addition every heresy that holds or teaches what is alien to the catholic church.[37]

The statement has been carefully worded. It seeks, where possible, to find common ground with the imperial statement of orthodoxy made at the conclusion of the first session, and repeated at the start of the fourth session—affirming, for instance, fidelity to Nicaea, Athanasius, and Cyril. It omits, however, Marcian's reference to the authority of the Constantinopolitan Creed and the *Tomus* of Leo. The mention of Cyril's writings is left vague (unlike Marcian's formula, which had specified Cyril's *Second Letter* and the Formula of Reunion), presumably so as not to rule out the *Anathemas*. Similarly, whilst crude stereotypes of Eutyches' doctrine are anathematized, Eutyches himself is not explicitly condemned. In this way, then, the Egyptian bishops hoped to

[35] Dioscorus had, after all, anathematized Pope Leo in the lead-up to Chalcedon: *ACO* II.1.2, 29 (III.294); cf. R. V. Sellers (1953), *The Council of Chalcedon: A Historical and Doctrinal Survey* (London: SPCK), 103, fn. 1.

[36] *ACO* II.1.2, 109f (IV.14f).

[37] *ACO* II.1.2, 110:29–39 (IV.25): *Τὴν ἐξ ἀρχῆς παραδοθεῖσαν ἡμῖν ἐκ τῶν ἁγίων καὶ πνευματοφόρων ἡμῶν πατέρων ὀρθόδοξον πίστιν ἀπό τε τοῦ εὐαγγελιστοῦ τοῦ ἁγίου Μάρκου καὶ τοῦ ἀοιδίμου ἐπισκόπου καὶ μάρτυρος Πέτρου καὶ τῶν ἁγίων ἡμῶν πατέρων Ἀθανασίου Θεοφίλου καὶ τοῦ ἐν ἁγίοις Κυρίλλου καὶ ἡμεῖς φυλάττοντες καὶ τῆς ἐκείνων ὁμολογίας ὑπάρχοντες μαθηταὶ ταύτην πρεσβεύομεν καὶ κατὰ ταύτην φρονοῦμεν, καθὼς καὶ οἱ ἐν Νικαίαι τιη ἐξέθεντο καὶ ὁ μακαριώτατος Ἀθανάσιος καὶ ὁ ἐν ἁγίοις Κύριλλος, ἀναθεματίζοντες πᾶσαν αἵρεσιν τήν τε Ἀρείου καὶ Εὐνομίου καὶ Μανιχαίου καὶ Νεστορίου καὶ τῶν λεγόντων ἐξ οὐρανοῦ τὴν σάρκα τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν ὑπάρχειν καὶ μὴ ἐκ τῆς ἁγίας καὶ θεοτόκου Μαρίας τῆς παρθένου καθ' ὁμοιότητα πάντων ἡμῶν χωρὶς ἁμαρτίας, πρὸς δὲ τούτοις καὶ πᾶσαν αἵρεσιν ἐκτὸς τῆς καθολικῆς ἐκκλησίας φρονοῦσάν τε ἢ διδάσκουσαν.*

escape assenting to the particular construal of 'Nicaea' that the council had just promulgated, by retreating into a simpler and seemingly uncontroversial expression of the faith—one which acknowledged Nicaea and Cyril, while quietly omitting those elements that were unpalatable. Indeed, the confession of faith did not require any major doctrinal concession from the Egyptian bishops—under its loose terminology, their hard-line Cyrillianism remained untouched.

Under extreme pressure, the Egyptian bishops eventually accepted the anathematization of Eutyches' doctrine (a tactical concession that Dioscorus had also been willing to make[38]), but continued to resist subscription to Leo's *Tomus*. In this context, they deployed a further 'Nicene' defence:

> This was laid down in a canon by the 318 holy fathers who assembled at Nicaea, that the whole Egyptian diocese should follow the archbishop of the great city of Alexandria and that nothing should be done without him by any of the bishops under him.[39]

The bishops again sought to ground their position in the authority of Nicaea—here through a very strained interpretation of that council's sixth canon. The underlying assumption was that the canons of Nicaea, just as much as the Creed, participated in the unique authority of the '318 holy fathers'.[40] Against this claim to be truly Nicene, indeed, the council had no convincing riposte. Instead, it simply fell back on an assertion of its own authority to determine orthodoxy: 'It is not right that ten heretics should be heard and that 1,200 bishops be ignored. We do not require them to express now their own faith on behalf of others, but we are telling them to assent to orthodoxy in their own person'.[41] In short, the crafty petition of the Egyptian bishops, and the weak episcopal response to it, demonstrates the ease with which 'Nicaea' could be invoked as a refuge for 'heretics', and reveals the difficulty that the council had in refuting this strategy.

The second group to present themselves at the fourth session were monastic supporters of Eutyches from Constantinople. The monastic communities in Constantinople had remained deeply divided over the affair of Eutyches since 448, and the febrile situation in the city had been exacerbated by Anatolius'

[38] Cf. *ACO* II.1.1, 92:18–24 (I.168), and after Chalcedon, Ps.-Zach., *H.E.* III.1.

[39] *ACO* II.1.2, 111:36–9 (IV.31): *τοῦτο γὰρ καὶ οἱ ἐπὶ τῆς Νικαέων ἅγιοι πατέρες συναγηγερμένοι ἐκανόνισαν τιη ὥστε ἀκολουθεῖν πᾶσαν τὴν Αἰγυπτιακὴν διοίκησιν τῶι ἀρχιεπισκόπωι τῆς μεγαλοπόλεως Ἀλεξανδρείας καὶ μηδὲν δίχα αὐτοῦ πράττεσθαι παρά τινος τῶν ὑπ᾽ αὐτὸν ἐπισκόπων.*

[40] Cf. Pope Leo's similar attitude (*Epp.* 43, 44, 106).

[41] *ACO* II.1.2, 113:9–12 (IV.50): *καὶ οὔκ ἐστι δίκαιον δέκα αἱρετικοὺς ἀκουσθῆναι καὶ παροφθῆναι χιλίους διακοσίους ἐπισκόπους. οὔτε γὰρ νῦν ἀπαιτοῦμεν αὐτοὺς ὑπὲρ ἑτέρων τὴν ἑαυτῶν πίστιν φανερῶσαι, ἀλλ᾽ εἰς οἰκεῖον πρόσωπον λέγομεν αὐτοὺς συνθέσθαι τῆι ὀρθοδοξίαι,* cf. *ACO* II.1.2, 112:33–6 (IV.46).

provocative attempts to suppress the Eutychian party in the months before Chalcedon.[42] It is telling that one of Marcian's first acts after the Definition was formally promulgated at the sixth session was to prohibit public disputation concerning the faith in Constantinople.[43] The aim of these Eutychian monks at the fourth session was, like the Egyptian bishops before them, to evade subscription to the new imperial idea of 'Nicaea'. Following Eutyches' own strategy in 448 and 449, they pleaded their fidelity to the simple faith of 'Nicaea and Ephesus', and, on this basis, resisted their opponents' demands for further doctrinal clarification. The monks also claimed the support of the emperor himself for their stance—for, they alleged, Marcian had assured them that Chalcedon had convened only to confirm the faith of Nicaea, which they interpreted as involving the mere reaffirmation of the Creed.[44] On further investigation, however, it became clear that this narrative was a pious fiction, an expression of what they had *wanted* Marcian to say.[45] The monks, however, persevered in their strategy, and gave the following account of their Nicene orthodoxy:

> Indeed our most pious emperor, from the moment he proposed that this council should take place, told us that the faith defined by the 318 holy fathers would simply be confirmed and nothing other than this would be moved or effected. In the light of this decision, the deposition of the most holy Archbishop Dioscorus is completely unreasonable, since without either him or the most holy bishops with him we cannot say or do anything regarding the faith. Give orders therefore for the appearance of the same Archbishop Dioscorus and all the bishops with him, so that the scandals concerning the faith may be rooted out and the orthodox congregations have no schisms among themselves [...] If your holinesses should oppose our proper demands and choose to exercise an authority contrary to what is beneficial, we shall call to witness Christ the Lord, the most pious emperor, the most glorious officials and the sacred senate, and your own consciences, and then, shaking our garments, break off communion with you. For if the symbol of the faith of the 318 is rejected, we cannot bear to be in communion with those who reject it. For a more complete proof that we believe nothing contrary to the Creed and that there is no occasion for any calumny being made against us, we have attached both the Creed itself and the decree that confirms it and was enacted by the holy and oecumenical council that deposed Nestorius.[46]

[42] *ACO* II.1.2, 115:40–116:34 (IV.76); cf. D. Caner (2002), *Wandering, Begging Monks: Spiritual Authority and the Promotion of Monasticism in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press), 223ff.

[43] *ACO* II.1.2, 156:15–23 (VI.14). Despite this, the Eutychian party remained strong in the city for some time afterwards: Leo, *Epp.* 136, 142.

[44] *ACO* II.1.2, 117:25–7 (IV.88). [45] *ACO* II.1.2, 120:33–6 (IV.112).

[46] *ACO* II.1.2, 117:25–118:2 (IV.88): *καὶ γὰρ ὁ εὐσεβέστατος ἡμῶν βασιλεύς, ἀφ᾽ οὗ προέθετο τὴν σύνοδον ταύτην γενέσθαι, ἐπηγγείλατο ἡμῖν τὰ τῆς πίστεως τῆς ἐκτεθείσης παρὰ τῶν τιη ἁγίων πατέρων ἐπισφραγίζεσθαι μόνον καὶ μηδὲν ἕτερον πρὸ τούτου κινεῖσθαι ἢ γίγνεσθαι. τούτου δὲ δόξαντος πάντως οὐκ εὔλογος ἡ καθαίρεσις ἡ γενομένη κατὰ Διοσκόρου τοῦ ἁγιωτάτου ἀρχιεπισκόπου, ἐπειδὴ οὔτε ἐκτὸς αὐτοῦ ἢ τῶν σὺν αὐτῶι ὄντων ἁγιωτάτων ἐπισκόπων δυνάμεθά*

The Constantinopolitan monks thus presented themselves as unswervingly loyal to the 'faith defined by the 318 fathers', as read in the light of the 'decree' of 22 July 431—reaffirming, in other words, the Nicene construal of Eutyches and Dioscorus enshrined at Ephesus II. They further buttressed this claim by presenting the text of the Nicene Creed, in the documentary context of the Ephesine *acta* of 22 July—just as Eutyches and Dioscorus had done. In this way, then, the confession of 'Nicaea and Ephesus' became a way of evading any further doctrinal clarification of the Nicene faith. To assent to Leo's *Tomus* and to consent to Dioscorus' deposition was thus to violate the unique status of Nicaea, and to transgress the faith of the fathers of Ephesus. It was, in short, not Eutyches' supporters, but the bishops of Chalcedon, who had truly rejected Nicaea.

It was precisely this idea of Nicaea that Chalcedon could not allow to remain legitimate, for it provided a safe 'Nicene' refuge for all the recalcitrant followers of Dioscorus. The difficulty for Marcian was that Eutyches and Dioscorus had taken the universally accepted rhetoric of the sole sufficiency of Nicaea, and deployed it in the service of a hard-line Cyrillian theological agenda. In doing so, they had tainted, and so rendered unusable, the standard cypher of 'Nicaea and Ephesus', and threatened to paralyse any attempts at doctrinal refinement. The bishops of Chalcedon had thus somehow to invalidate this renegade 'Nicene' orthodoxy while themselves avoiding the charge of adding to or distorting the Nicene faith.

The problem that the monks' petition posed for the assembled bishops is evident from the unusual condition of the conciliar *acta* at this point. The plaint is recorded, but not the text of the Creed and Ephesine *acta* with which it concluded—the prospect of the Nicene Creed being formally included in the minutes in the context of a 'heretical' petition was far too threatening. Instead the archdeacon Aetius, without any explanation, is recorded as immediately reading out Canon 5 of the Council of Antioch (328).[47] The challenge of the Constantinopolitan text was thus met by a counter-text, but the relative

τι λέγειν ἢ ποιεῖν περὶ πίστεως. κελεύσατε τοίνυν παραγενέσθαι τὸν αὐτὸν ἀρχιεπίσκοπον Διόσκορον καὶ πάντας τοὺς σὺν αὐτῶι ἐπισκόπους, ὥστε τὰ σκάνδαλα τὰ γενόμενα περὶ τὴν πίστιν ἐκκοπῆναι καὶ τοὺς ὀρθοδόξους λαοὺς μὴ ἔχειν σχίσματα ἐν ἑαυτοῖς, ἐπειδὴ ἡ περὶ τοῦτο τὸ μέρος σπουδὴ πάντων ὑμῖν τῶν ἐν τῶι βίωι τούτωι προτιμοτέρα ὀφείλει εἶναι. εἰ δὲ εἰς τὰ οὕτως ἀκολούθως παρ᾽ ἡμῶν ζητούμενα ἡ ὁσιότης ὑμῶν ἀντιτείνει καὶ θέλει αὐθεντίαι χρήσασθαι ἐναντίαι οὔσηι τοῖς συμφέρουσι, μαρτυράμενοι τὸν δεσπότην Χριστὸν καὶ τὸν εὐσεβέστατον βασιλέα καὶ τοὺς μεγαλοπρεπεστάτους ἄρχοντας καὶ τὴν ἱερὰν σύγκλητον, καὶ τὸ ὑμέτερον δὲ συνειδὸς καὶ ἀποτιναξάμενοι τὰ ἱμάτια τῆς κοινωνίας τῆς πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἐκτὸς ποιήσομεν ἑαυτούς. οὐ γὰρ ἀνεχόμεθα τοῦ συμβόλου τῆς πίστεως τῶν τιη ἀθετουμένου κοινωνοὶ γενέσθαι τοῖς τοῦτο ἀθετοῦσιν. εἰς δὲ τελειοτέραν ἀπόδειξιν τοῦ μηδὲν ἡμᾶς ὑπεναντίον τοῦ συμβόλου τῆς πίστεως φρονεῖν μήτε χώραν ἔχειν τινὰ συκοφαντίαν καθ᾽ ἡμῶν γινομένην ὑπετάξαμεν καὶ αὐτὸ τὸ σύμβολον καὶ τὸν ὅρον τὸν ἐπισφραγίζοντα τοῦτο καὶ ἐξενεχθέντα παρὰ τῆς ἁγίας καὶ οἰκουμενικῆς συνόδου τῆς καθελούσης Νεστόριον.

[47] *ACO* II.1.2, 118:3–7 (IV.89).

obscurity of the canon, and its lack of relevance to the case at hand, reveals the weakness of the bishops' position—as does the fact that their attempted rebuttal was on disciplinary, rather than doctrinal grounds.

The monks remained resolute, and pleaded again their impeccable Nicene credentials:

> CAROSUS: I recognize the Creed of the 318 fathers who were at Nicaea, in which I was baptized, since I do not recognize any other creed. They are bishops, they have the power to excommunicate and depose, and if they want anything, they have the power. But I do not recognize any other creed beyond this. When the holy Timothy baptized me at Tomi, he told me not to believe in anything else.
>
> DOROTHEUS: I abide by the creed of the 318 holy fathers at Nicaea, in which I was baptized, and in the decree of those who deposed Nestorius at Ephesus. I believe accordingly, and I do not recognize any other Creed apart from this.
>
> BARSAUMAS: I believe in accordance with the 318, and I was baptized accordingly in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, according to the Lord's teaching to the apostles.
>
> HELPIDIUS: I myself believe in accordance with the 318 fathers at Nicaea and those at Ephesus who deposed Nestorius, and I abide by the decree issued by the holy fathers.[48]

The monks reiterated, then, their sole fidelity to Nicaea, and, following the Ephesine decree, their rejection of any other Creed. Their association of the Nicene Creed with a baptismal context was a further means of emphasizing its unique authority. There is here none of the subtlety of Cyril's earlier construal of the faith of Nicaea, whereby the Creed was to be read via a series of hermeneutical authorities—there is, instead, simply the elevation of 'Canon 7' as the Creed's sole interpreter. Cyril had also evidently not won his battle to have his 'pure' version of the Creed enshrined as the only

[48] *ACO* II.1.2, 118:22–36 (IV.93–6):

[IV.93] *Τὴν τῶν τιη τῶν ἐν Νικαίαι γενομένων πατέρων πίστιν, ἐν ἧι καὶ ἐβαπτίσθην, οἶδα, ἐπεὶ ἐγὼ ἄλλην πίστιν οὐκ οἶδα. ἐπίσκοποί εἰσιν· ἐξουσίαν ἔχουσι καὶ ἀφορίσαι καὶ καθαιρῆσαι καὶ εἴ τι θέλουσιν, ἐξουσίαν ἔχουσιν. πλείω ταύτης ἐγὼ ἄλλην οὐκ οἶδα. ἐμὲ ὁ ἅγιος Θεότιμος ἐν Τόμοις ὅτε ἐβάπτισεν, ἐκέλευσέ μοι ἄλλο τί ποτε μὴ φρονῆσαι.* [Price and Gaddis correct Schwartz's reading of 'Theotimus' to 'Tomi': Price and Gaddis, *Chalcedon*, I, 159, fn. 63].

[IV.94] *Τῆι πίστει τῶν ἁγίων πατέρων τῶν ἐν Νικαίαι τιη, ἐν ἧι καὶ ἐβαπτίσθην, καὶ τῶι ὅρωι τῶν ἐν Ἐφέσωι καθελόντων Νεστό- ριον ἐμμένω καὶ οὕτως πιστεύω καὶ παρὰ ταύτην ἄλλην πίστιν οὐκ οἶδα.*

[IV.95] *Οὕτως πιστεύω ὡς οἱ τιη καὶ οὕτως ἐβαπτίσθην εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος ὡς αὐτοὺς ἐδίδαξεν ὁ κύριος τοὺς ἀποστόλους.*

[IV.96] *Ἐγὼ πιστεύω ὡς οἱ τιη πατέρες οἱ ἐν Νικαίαι καὶ οἱ ἐν Ἐφέσωι οἱ Νεστόριον καθελόντες καὶ ἐμμένω τῶι ὅρωι ὧι ἐξέθεντο οἱ ἅγιοι πατέρες*; cf. Carosus' similar remark later in the session: 119:16–21 (IV.103).

legitimate text—for, when Dorotheus went on to cite the Creed, it was according to a divergent text.[49]

Thereafter, the fourth session fizzled out amidst the unresolved tension between these opposing construals of the Nicene faith. The plaint of the monks was finally settled in a subsequent hearing, not on the basis of any meaningful theological response, but rather through an appeal to the obscure canon of Antioch 328.[50] However, allowing Eutyches' supporters to make their petition at such length may have served an important wider purpose—namely, to bring home to the bishops the dangerous flexibility of 'Nicaea' as a cypher of orthodoxy, and so to soften their opposition to a new definition of the faith.[51]

To conclude, the Chalcedonian proceedings strikingly reveal how problematic the flexibility of 'Nicaea' as a cypher of orthodoxy had become by 451. For bishops confronted by the evidence of an inconvenient past, that flexibility allowed their theological contradictions to be blurred and their hypocrisy to be disguised—the affirmation of 'Nicaea' (or 'Nicaea and Ephesus') gave to their disparate remarks the appearance of consistency, and so became a helpful fig leaf to hide their blushes. It was now far safer, indeed, to parrot such catchphrases than to contribute any genuine Christological reflection—in this way, the appeal to Nicaea increasingly threatened to paralyse meaningful thought on the nature of orthodoxy. As Aetherichus tellingly responded when told to expound the faith, 'I certainly know it, but I cannot express it, except to say: if anyone holds different beliefs from the 318 and those at Ephesus, let him be anathema'.[52]

Yet the same cypher of 'Nicaea' in which men like Aetherichus took refuge could also be exploited by those who wished to evade the new Nicene orthodoxy that Marcian now sought to establish. Could not Eutyches and Dioscorus, after all, claim to be just as faithful to Nicaea as their opponents? Indeed, the great achievement of Ephesus II had been to take the consensus slogan of 'Nicaea and Ephesus' and the widely held shibboleth of Nicaea's sole sufficiency, and to make them serve a radical, hard-line Cyrillian agenda. By prioritizing the decree of 22 July 431, Dioscorus had fashioned a reading of Nicene orthodoxy (based on a particular documentary presentation of the Creed) that allowed his adherents at Chalcedon to claim that further doctrinal definition was not only unnecessary, but actually fell under the direct condemnation of Ephesus I.

Marcian was thus faced with the dilemma that any new expression of the character of the Nicene faith could be effectively resisted on impeccably 'Nicene' grounds, and that the inherited rhythms of orthodox discourse (such as fidelity to 'Nicaea and Ephesus') had become the primary preserve

[49] *ACO* II.1.2, 120:15–24 (IV.108). [50] Cf. *ACO* II.1.3, 99–101.

[51] Price and Gaddis similarly suggest that this episode reveals Marcian's 'artful manipulation' of the proceedings of the fourth session: Price and Gaddis, *Chalcedon*, II, 120.

[52] *ACO* II.1.1, 118:31–119:2 (I.313), see above, fn. 21.

of those whose doctrines Marcian had determined to rule as contrary to Nicaea. Chalcedon faced the task, in short, of authoritatively rearticulating the Nicene faith in such a way that the 'Nicene' construal of Dioscorus and Eutyches could be exposed as erroneous.

MAKING THE CASE FOR A NEW 'DEFINITION'

Marcian called a council to Nicaea so that he might become the new Constantine—but he first had to address the fact that Pope Leo had set his heart on being the new Cyril. In the aftermath of Ephesus II, Leo had sought to present his *Tomus* as the doctrinal solution to the Eutychian heresy, just as Cyril's *Second Letter* had addressed the errors of Nestorianism. Indeed, Leo's claims to stand on the faith of Nicaea became increasingly forthright, as did his assertion that the *Tomus* (like Cyril's *Second Letter*) was in perfect harmony with the Creed.[53] When Anatolius was chosen as Flavian's replacement in Constantinople, Leo set out clear criteria by which he was to demonstrate his orthodoxy, and so be received into communion with Rome:

> Let him then read again what is the belief on the Lord's Incarnation which the holy fathers guarded and has always been similarly preached, and when he has perceived that the letter of Cyril of holy memory, bishop of Alexandria, agrees with the view of those who preceded him (wherein he wished to correct and cure Nestorius, refuting his wrong statements and setting out more clearly the faith as defined at Nicaea, and which was sent by him and placed in the library of the Apostolic See), let him further reconsider the proceedings of the Ephesine Synod wherein the testimonies of catholic priests on the Lord's Incarnation are inserted and maintained by Cyril of holy memory. Let him not scorn also to read my letter over, which he will find to agree throughout with the pious belief of the fathers.[54]

This marks a significant departure from the idea of 'Nicaea' advanced by Flavian and Eusebius at the Home Synod. For whilst retaining their prioritization of Cyril's *Second Letter*, Leo now replaced the Formula of Reunion with his own *Tomus* as the second hermeneutical authority for correctly

[53] For instance, Leo, *Epp.* 54, 67, 95.

[54] Leo, *Ep.* 69 (*PL* 54, 891A): Relegat itaque sollicite quae a sanctis patribus incarnationis dominicae fides fuerit custodita, semperque similiter praedicata, et cum sanctae memoriae Cyrilli Alexandrini episcopi epistolam (qua Nestorium corrigere et sanare voluit, pravas praedicationes ipsius arguens, et evidentius fidem Nicaenae definitionis exponens, quamque ab eo missam apostolicae sedis scrinia susceperunt) praecedentium sensui perspexerit consonantem; Ephesinae etiam synodi gesta recenseat, quibus contra Nestorii impietatem, a sanctae memoriae Cyrillo inserta et allegata sunt de incarnatione domini catholicorum testimonia sacerdotum. Non aspernetur etiam meam epistolam recensere, quam pietati patrum per omnia concordare reperiet; cf. Sellers, *Chalcedon*, 94–7.

'reading' the Nicene Creed. Thus rather than tailoring Cyril's legacy to present him as standing against the twin errors of Nestorianism and Eutychianism (as Flavian had done), Leo instead sought to balance Cyril's writing against Nestorius with his own writing against Eutyches.[55] Just as Cyril had provided patristic testimonies to support his case at Ephesus (note the direct appeal to the evidence of the Ephesine *acta*), so Leo now appended to his letter to Anatolius a long florilegium in support of the two natures.[56] And just as Cyril's construal of Nicaea had been affirmed at an oecumenical council (i.e. at Ephesus I), so now Leo pushed for an oecumenical council in the West to formally enshrine his *Tomus* as an authoritative exposition of the Nicene faith.[57] Leo, then, presented himself as the second Cyril, safeguarding and clarifying the Nicene faith through his *Tomus*.

The success of Leo's subsequent campaign of episcopal subscription to the *Tomus* meant that, by the time of Chalcedon, a considerable number of the assembled bishops had already formally affirmed it as orthodox.[58] Leo therefore soon came to regard the necessary business of the council as simply to reaffirm the faith of Nicaea through assent to the *Tomus*.[59] Why then, one might ask, did Marcian not confine Chalcedon's agenda precisely to this objective? After all, Ephesus I provided the emperor with a clear precedent for having an oecumenical council establish a particular document as a privileged hermeneutical key to reading Nicaea rightly, and, in this way, the contribution of Leo's *Tomus* against Eutychianism could have been enshrined as a fitting counterpart to the contribution of Cyril's *Second Letter* against Nestorianism. Moreover, Marcian's chosen path—the promulgation of a new 'definition' of the faith—cut so deeply against inherited assumptions regarding the Nicene Creed's unique authority and sole sufficiency as to be needlessly, almost ludicrously, provocative.

It is possible, of course, that Marcian recognized that the doctrinal infelicities abounding in the *Tomus* made it a rather inadequate theological resolution to the Christological controversy, and that its affirmation of the Apostles' Creed rather than the Nicene Creed made it somewhat inappropriate

[55] For further evidence of this strategy, cf. Leo, *Ep.* 70.

[56] Cf. *ACO* II.1.1, 22–3; Leo, *Ep.* 165 (in this epistle of 458 the florilegium was further extended).

[57] Leo hoped that, in this way, his proposed council would rule authoritatively on the authentic meaning of Nicaea, so that no one could any longer appeal to Nicaea in an erroneous or deceitful manner (*Ep.* 69).

[58] Cf. *ACO* II.1.1, 78:20–2 (III.4), 78:35–79:2 (III.8); cf. Leo, *Epp.* 82, 88, 93. Since subscription to the *Tomus* explicitly included the rejection of the twin heresies of Nestorianism and Eutychianism, Bevan's argument that Chalcedon was originally intended to mark the formal exoneration of Nestorius himself is extremely unlikely—too many bishops were already formally committed to a narrative of orthodoxy in which Nestorius was a condemned heretic. If Nestorius had indeed been invited to attend the council (as, Bevan rightly notes, several early sources attest), it was far more likely for reasons of humiliation than acclaim. See G. Bevan (2007), 'The Last Days of Nestorius in the Syriac Sources', *CSSS* 7, 39–54.

[59] Cf. Leo, *Epp.* 89, 90, 93.

to be established as a formal exposition of the Nicene faith.[60] The primary explanation, however, can only be that Marcian, as suggested above, wished not only confirm the work of Nicaea but to complete it, by composing a new doctrinal statement that would finally settle two decades of dispute about the Nicene faith and bring peace to the Church. It was an ambitious plan, but also perfectly fitting that the resources of 'Nicaea' should be deployed so inventively in an attempt to solve the problems that 'Nicaea' itself had caused.

To achieve his purpose, Marcian ensured that the proceedings of Chalcedon were just as tightly controlled, if not more so, than the 'tyrannous' *latrocinium* of Dioscorus.[61] And, although the lengthy first session of the council was largely devoted to the hostile investigation of the conciliar record of Ephesus II, there were several clear indications of the emperor's underlying Nicene agenda.

One such instance came in response to the reading of Eutyches' plaint from 449, in which the archimandrite had made a stout defence of his unwavering adherence to the Nicene Creed and to the Ephesine decree of 431. This made, of course, for rather uncomfortable listening at a council that had already determined to pronounce Eutyches' doctrine as heretical and contrary to the Nicene faith. Two episcopal interventions were therefore made, orchestrated to counter Eutyches' dangerous testimony.

The first, from Eusebius, denied that the Ephesine decree had ever existed: 'He lied! There is no such decree! There is no canon that states this!'[62] This may, at first glance, appear to be a puzzling response. Yet it was, in fact, perfectly reasonable—for, as we have argued above, the 22 July *acta* that Eutyches and Dioscorus had so dramatically exploited had not received a widespread circulation outside Cyril's closest supporters, and so had not displaced the majority reception of Ephesus I via the 22 June proceedings. Nonetheless, at Chalcedon, Dioscorus refused to concede the point:

> There are four documents containing this decree. If the bishops decreed it, is it not a decree? Does he think it is a canon? It is not a canon. But a canon is one thing, a decree another. Impugn the five conciliar documents. I have a copy and so does such a one and such a one, let them all bring their documents![63]

[60] The latter part of Session II, indeed, had to be devoted to dealing with numerous accusations of theological error directed at parts of the *Tomus.*

[61] This tight imperial control was achieved through the steady hand of the experienced imperial officials whom Marcian had chosen to chair the council's sessions, cf. G. E. M. de Ste. Croix (2006), 'The Council of Chalcedon', in *Christian Persecution, Martyrdom, and Orthodoxy*, ed. M. Whitby and J. Streeter (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 259–320. Marcian did not make a personal appearance at the council until its grand sixth session.

[62] *ACO* II.1.1, 91:15–16 (I.158): *Ἐψεύσατο· οὐκ ἔστιν ὅρος τοιοῦτος, οὐκ ἔστιν κανὼν τοῦτο διαγορεύων.*

[63] *ACO* II.1.1, 91:17–20 (I.159): *Τέσσαρά ἐστιν βιβλία περιέχοντα τοῦτον τὸν ὅρον. ὃν ὥρισαν οἱ ἐπίσκοποι, οὔκ ἐστιν ὅρος; μὴ γὰρ ἔχει ὅτι κανών ἐστιν; οὔκ ἐστιν κανών· ἄλλο ἐστὶν κανών, ἄλλο ὅρος. κατηγόρησον πέντε συνοδικῶν βιβλίων· κἀγὼ ἔχω καὶ ὁ δεῖνα καὶ ὁ δεῖνα ἔχει, ἐνέγκωσιν πάντες τὰ βιβλία.*

Dioscorus thus appealed to the concrete evidence of the 22 July proceedings, and sought to portray the document as widely known—although his variation between four and five such texts suggests a degree of imprecision.[64] Again we note how the authority of Ephesus I (and of the Nicene faith that it expounded) was located in, and expressed through, particular selections of its documentary record. Precisely because the infamous Ephesine ruling occurred within the conciliar proceedings of 22 July, indeed, Dioscorus could maintain that it was not a mere disciplinary *κανών* but an authoritative *ὅρος* regarding the faith.[65] Eusebius' intervention, in short, was something of a failure. Indeed, the success of Dioscorus' endeavour to have the Ephesine decree established as a legitimate (indeed central) part of the reception of Ephesus I was subsequently reflected in Marcian's *Definitio*, which could not evade, and so had instead to reinterpret, the decree's contribution.

The second attempt to challenge Eutyches' apparent profession of a pure Nicene faith came in the intervention of Diogenes of Cyzicus:

> He [Eutyches] adduced the council of the holy fathers at Nicaea deceptively, since additions were made to it by the holy fathers on account of the evil opinions of Apollinarius, Valentinus, Macedonius, and those like them, and there were added to the Creed of the holy fathers the words, 'He came down and became incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary'. This Eutyches omitted, as an Apollinarian. For Apollinarius also accepted the holy council at Nicaea but interpreted what it said according to his own heresy, and avoiding saying 'from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary', in order not to profess at all the union of the flesh. The holy fathers who came after clarified the words 'became incarnate' of the holy fathers of Nicaea, by adding 'from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary'.[66]

This is the first explicit reference to the Creed of Constantinople. The text would come to play a key role in Marcian's justification of his Definition at Chalcedon, since if additions had been made to 'clarify' the Nicene Creed at a council in the past, further such additions could legitimately be made at a

[64] Dioscorus may be referring to multiple copies of the Cyrilline *acta* of 22 July, or he may be counting the subsequent citations of the decree—for instance, in Eutyches' *confessio*, in the first session of Ephesus II, and in Theodosius' formal edict after the council.

[65] Cf. I. N. Karmires (1971), 'The Distinction between the Horoi and the Canons of the Early Synods and their Significance for the Acceptance of the Council of Chalcedon', *GOTR* 16.1, 79–107; S. O. Horn (1982), *Petrou Kathedra: Der Bischof von Rom und die Synoden von Ephesus (449) und Chalcedon* (Paderborn: Bonifatius-Druckerei), 157–60.

[66] *ACO* II.1.1, 91:21–30 (I.160): *Δολερῶς προέταξεν τὴν ἐν Νικαίαι τῶν ἁγίων πατέρων σύνοδον, ἐδέξατο δὲ προσθήκας παρὰ τῶν ἁγίων πατέρων διὰ τὴν ἔννοιαν τὴν κακὴν Ἀπολιναρίου καὶ Οὐαλεντίνου καὶ Μακεδονίου καὶ τῶν ὁμοίων ἐκείνοις καὶ προστέθειται τῶι συμβόλωι τῶν ἁγίων πατέρων τὸ κατελθόντα καὶ σαρκωθέντα ἐκ πνεύματος ἁγίου καὶ Μαρίας τῆς παρθένου. τοῦτο γὰρ παρέλιπεν Εὐτυχὴς ὡς Ἀπολιναριστής· καὶ Ἀπολινάριος γὰρ δέχεται τὴν ἐν Νικαίαι ἁγίαν σύνοδον, κατὰ τὴν οἰκείαν παρανομίαν ἐκλαμβάνων τὸ ῥητόν, καὶ φεύγει τὸ ἐκ πνεύματος ἁγίου καὶ Μαρίας τῆς παρθένου, ἵνα πανταχοῦ μὴ τὴν ἕνωσιν τῆς σαρκὸς ὁμολογήσηι. οἱ γὰρ ἅγιοι πατέρες οἱ μετὰ ταῦτα τὸ ἐσαρκώθη, ὃ εἶπον οἱ ἅγιοι ἐν Νικαίαι πατέρες, ἐσαφήνισαν εἰπόντες ἐκ πνεύματος ἁγίου καὶ Μαρίας τῆς παρθένου.*

council in the present. For Diogenes, then, Eutyches' error was not that he read the text of the Nicene Creed wrongly, but that he was not reading the right text in the first place—to confess Nicaea without acknowledging the subsequent additions of Constantinople was to grasp the Nicene faith incompletely. Indeed Eutyches had, Diogenes alleged, deceitfully subtracted from the credal text in order to misrepresent its teaching. In this way, Eutyches' ploy of exploiting a simple confession of Nicaea in order to disguise his doctrinal eccentricities could be undermined, since, on Diogenes' construal, the Creed as interpreted via the text of 381 did, in fact, have something to say about Eutyches' doctrine—namely, that it was Apollinarian. By expanding the theological content involved in confessing 'Nicaea', then, Diogenes prevented the cypher from being a refuge for Eutyches, and, more broadly, began to address the problem that the 'pure' credal text of 325 appeared to have little to say on the subject of the Christological controversy at hand.

Diogenes' case, however, rested on a rather shaky textual foundation, namely, the claim that the fathers of Constantinople had added 'from the Holy Spirit and Mary the Virgin' to the Nicene Creed as an explicit prohibition on Apollinarian (and therefore Eutychian) teaching. For, while this clause did indeed feature in the Constantinopolitan Creed (as evident from the subsequent citation of the full text at the second session[67]), it had in fact come to prominence, as argued above, in the context of Nestorius' exegesis of the Nicene Creed against Cyril. Remarkably, then, a clause previously condemned by Cyril as a Nestorian corruption of the true text of the Nicene Creed had now been resurrected as the alleged product of a later Creed designed to 'clarify' the teaching of Nicaea: Nestorius' weapon against Cyril had become Diogenes' weapon against Eutyches.[68] While Diogenes' intention may have been subtly to rescue Leo's *Tomus* (which had made significant use of the clause) from the charge of Nestorianism,[69] it is more likely that his intervention represented a calculated attempt by Marcian to 'test the water' regarding the status of the Constantinopolitan Creed.[70]

Diogenes' intervention was immediately met with two opposing cries from the assembled bishops, which together illustrate the depth of the dispute over the character of 'Nicaea'. On the one hand, the Egyptian bishops shouted

[67] *ACO* II.1.2, 80:3–16 (III.14).

[68] The same depiction of the clause as a Constantinopolitan addition was subsequently also made by Florentius of Hadrianopolis: *ACO* II.1.2, 106:14–16 (IV.9.133).

[69] Cf. Ritter, *Konstantinopel*, 192–4. As noted above, the contribution of the *Tomus* in this regard was doubly problematic, since Leo had appealed to the clause due to its appearance in the Apostles' Creed, not the Nicene Creed. If Leo's *Tomus* was to be affirmed at Chalcedon as a faithful exposition of the Nicene faith, it was necessary, as Diogenes attempted, to associate its exegesis of 'from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary' more directly with Nicaea.

[70] The likelihood that Diogenes had here been made the mouthpiece of the imperial agenda is increased by the evidence that, at Ephesus II, he had without any apparent qualms affirmed Eutyches' doctrine as following the faith of Nicaea: *ACO* II.1.1, 183:16–21 (I.884.11).

angrily in protest: 'no one admits any addition or subtraction!'[71] In other words, the attempt to legitimize credal clarification via an appeal to Constantinople 381 could easily be construed by Dioscorus' supporters as an impious addition to the pure Nicene Creed. On the other hand, the Oriental bishops responded with cries of: 'Eutyches said that!'[72] That is to say, the Egyptians' rhetorical appeal to 'Nicaea alone' had now become so tainted as a result of its exploitation by Dioscorus and Eutyches that it could no longer be employed as a means to resist the necessary task of further doctrinal definition.

At the very end of the first session, Marcian finally showed his hand. The imperial officials presiding over the council now made it clear that the foregoing investigation into Ephesus II had been merely the hors-d'oeuvre for the main business of the council: the 'exact examination' of the orthodox faith.[73] The bishops were commanded to set out in writing their own accounts of orthodoxy, and were to be guided in this endeavour by the emperor's own construal:

> the beliefs of our most divine and pious master accord with the *ἔκθεσις* of the 318 holy fathers of Nicaea, and the *ἔκθεσις* of the 150 fathers after that, with the canonical letters and expositions of the holy fathers Gregory, Basil, Hilary, Athanasius, and Ambrose, and with the two canonical letters of Cyril which were approved and published at the first council of Ephesus, and does not depart from their faith in any way. In addition it is a familiar fact that the most devout Leo archbishop of Senior Rome sent a letter to Flavian of devout memory concerning the dispute that Eutyches impiously stirred up in opposition to the catholic church.[74]

Nicaea here retained its priority, but only in a chronological sense. 'Nicaea' was no longer simply being equated with the orthodox faith (as if the terms were essentially synonymous), but was rather being redefined as just one

[71] *ACO* II.1.1, 91:31–3 (I.161): *Οὐδεὶς δέχεται προσθήκην, οὐδεὶς μείωσιν. τὰ τῶν ἐν Νικαίαι κρατείτω· ὁ ὀρθόδοξος βασιλεὺς τοῦτο ἐκέλευσεν.*

[72] *ACO* II.1.1, 91:34–5 (I.162): *Ταῦτα Εὐτυχὴς εἶπεν.*

[73] *ACO* II.1.1, 195:10–12 (I.1068): *Περὶ μὲν τῆς ὀρθοδόξου πίστεως καὶ καθολικῆς τελεώτερον συνόδου γινομένης τῆι ὑστεραίαι ἀκριβεστέραν ἐξέτασιν δεῖν γενέσθαι συνορῶμεν.* After all, Marcian had, entirely on his own authority, recalled the bishops deposed at Ephesus II almost immediately upon his accession—a fresh oecumenical council was necessary not so much to deal with the practical effects of the *latrocinium*, but to critique and reverse its construal of the Nicene faith. As the imperial officials put it, 'it is particularly because of the faith that the council has assembled' (*ACO* II.1.2, 78:5–6 [III.2]): *νῦν δὲ τὸ ζητούμενον καὶ κρινόμενον καὶ σπουδαζόμενόν ἐστιν ὥστε τὴν ἀληθῆ πίστιν συγκροτηθῆναι, δι᾽ ἣν μάλιστα καὶ ἡ σύνοδος γέγονεν.*

[74] *ACO* II.1, 195:36–196:6 (I.1072): *γινώσκων ὡς ὁ θειότατος καὶ εὐσεβέστατος ἡμῶν δεσπότης κατὰ τὴν ἔκθεσιν τῶν ἐν Νικαίαι ἁγίων πατέρων τιη καὶ κατὰ τὴν ἔκθεσιν τῶν ρν τῶν μετὰ ταῦτα καὶ τὰς κανονικὰς ἐπιστολὰς καὶ ἐκθέσεις τῶν ἁγίων πατέρων Γρηγορίου Βασιλείου Ἱλαρίου Ἀθανασίου Ἀμβροσίου καὶ τὰς Κυρίλλου δύο κανονικὰς ἐπιστολὰς τὰς ἐν τῆι κατ᾽ Ἔφεσον πρώτηι συνόδωι βεβαιωθείσας καὶ δημοσιευθείσας πιστεύει, κατ᾽ οὐδένα τρόπον τῆς αὐτῶν πίστεως ἀναχωρῶν. καὶ γὰρ ὁ εὐλαβέστατος ἀρχιεπίσκοπος τῆς πρεσβυτέρας Ῥώμης Λέων πρὸς τὴν παρὰ Εὐτυχοῦς ἀπίστως καὶ ὑπεναντίον τῆς καθολικῆς ἐκκλησίας ἀνακύψασαν ἀμφιβολίαν φαίνεται πρὸς τὸν τῆς εὐλαβοῦς μνήμης Φλαβιανὸν τὴν ἐπιστολὴν ἐκπέμψας.*

of that faith's authoritative historical expressions. The inclusion of the Constantinopolitan Creed was crucial in this subtle narrativization of orthodoxy—for now the *ἔκθεσις* of Nicaea did not stand alone, but was followed by a second *ἔκθεσις*, which was just as much the work of a special number of 'fathers'. As we have suggested, the refashioning of an obscure credal text (about which few of the bishops seem to have been aware) into the great *ἔκθεσις* of the fathers of Constantinople was part of Marcian's resourceful attempt to legitimize the promulgation of his new statement of faith, by providing evidence of a key precedent for legitimate credal composition.[75] If Dioscorus and Eutyches' appeal to the Ephesine decree of 431 could not be ignored, then it could at least be blunted—since, if that decree was understood in the light of the earlier activity of Constantinople 381, then its prohibition could not be interpreted as directed against *all* credal statements, but only against those *contrary* to the Nicene faith.

Marcian's selection of other authoritative texts was in part simply a demonstration of his patristic catholicity. Gregory, Basil, Hilary, Athanasius, and Ambrose provide the appropriate spread of venerable fathers from East and West, but their inclusion here is largely ornamental. His more significant choice was in the 'two canonical letters of Cyril', that is, the *Second Letter* and the Formula of Reunion (as cited and affirmed in Cyril's *Laetentur Caeli*).[76] This was a reassertion of Flavian and Eusebius' construal of the doctrinal achievement of Ephesus I, as set out at the Home Synod. Indeed, when the citation of these documents from 448 had been read out at Chalcedon, the imperial officials had made a rare intervention to affirm that 'The emperor holds this. The Augusta holds this. We all hold this'.[77] As at the Home Synod, the Formula was here directly associated with the work of Ephesus I.[78] In this way, Marcian's statement was reorientating the reception of Ephesus I and the legacy of Cyril back towards an Antiochene-friendly reading, and away from Dioscorus' focus on the session of 22 July and Cyril's *Third Letter*. Finally, to these approved documents Marcian added Leo's *Tomus* as a further expression of the faith. At this early stage in proceedings, however,

[75] As Price has noted, this involved a subtle shift from regarding the Constantinopolitan text as a variant form of the Nicene Creed itself (like, for instance, the Seleucia-Ctesiphon text of 410), to seeing it as a distinct and additional doctrinal formula: Price, 'Reception of Converts', esp. 25–6.

[76] Since 'canonical' in this context means 'approved by the council of Ephesus', the earlier use of 'canonical' to demarcate the works of Gregory, Basil, and the other fathers may be referring to the patristic passages cited in Cyril's 22 June session. Hilary was not quoted in Cyril's proceedings, but was quoted in the florilegium Leo attached to his *Tomus*, further suggesting that Marcian's selection of fathers was intended to synthesize the Cyrillian and Leonine contributions.

[77] *ACO* II.1.1, 111:28–9 (I.255): *Ὁ βασιλεὺς οὕτως φρονεῖ· ἡ αὐγούστα οὕτως φρονεῖ· πάντες οὕτως φρονοῦμεν.*

[78] It appears likely that in some cases the Ephesine *acta* circulated with the Formula attached as a summative statement; cf. *ACO* II.1.2, 80:19–25 (III.16), where the Formula is associated with the conciliar signatures of Ephesus I, just like Cyril's *Second Letter*.

he trod carefully, merely noting that the letter's existence was a 'familiar fact', rather than explicitly incorporating it within his narrative of orthodoxy.

Chalcedon's second session (the third in the Greek *acta*), however, revealed that Marcian's campaign for a new *Definitio* was still far from universally persuasive. In a clear echo of Cyril's 22 June proceedings at Ephesus I, the session was structured around the formal reading of certain authoritative texts—specifically, those documents (the Nicene Creed, the Constantinopolitan Creed, the two letters of Cyril, and the *Tomus*) that Marcian had already singled out, at the conclusion of the first session, as expressive of orthodoxy.

At the beginning of the session, Marcian made his position clear: the confirmation of true orthodoxy could now only be achieved by having the bishops 'produce a pure *ἔκθεσις* of the faith'.[79] This new imperial demand, of course, not only violated the common shibboleth of Nicaea's unique sufficiency but also far exceeded the task of an oecumenical council as established at Ephesus I, which was merely to recognize already written documents (such as Cyril's *Second Letter*) as reliable expositions of (or commentaries upon) the Nicene Creed. While the bishops may have arrived at Chalcedon expecting to affirm Leo's *Tomus* in that fashion, they had certainly not entertained the possibility of composing a new dogmatic formula.

The episcopal response, predictably, was a strident reassertion that there should be no new *ἔκθεσις* of the faith.[80] Indeed, the appeal to the Ephesine decree—'the canon forbids the making of another exposition!'—was now being made by all parties, not only the Dioscoran diehards.[81] Moreover, as Bishop Cecropius contended, most had already signed the *Tomus* as a reaffirmation of the true faith against the error of Eutyches, so no new doctrinal statement was necessary.[82] The opposition of the bishops was also evident from their varied reactions to the documents then formally recited. The Nicene Creed (quoted in the form given in Cyril's 22 June *acta*) was greeted with great adulation, as the true baptismal faith, which Cyril and Leo had rightly expounded.[83] The Constantinopolitan Creed, by contrast, was received in a far more muted fashion.[84] The two letters of Cyril were then read in order to establish their teaching (and not that of the *Anathemas*) as the authentic legacy of Cyril,[85] and after that the *Tomus* was heard in full.[86] In this

[79] *ACO* II.1.2, 78:10–11 (III.2): *σπουδάσατε ἄνευ φόβου ἢ χάριτος ἢ ἀπεχθείας τὴν πίστιν καθαρῶς ἐκθέσθαι* […].

[80] *ACO* II.1.2, 78:17–19 (III.3), 78:23–4 (III.5), 78:32–4 (III.7).

[81] *ACO* II.1.2, 78:32–3 (III.7): *ὁ κανὼν βούλεται ἄλλην ἔκθεσιν μὴ γενέσθαι.*

[82] *ACO* II.1.2, 78:20–2 (III.4). [83] *ACO* II.1.2, 79:27–32 (III.12).

[84] *ACO* II.1.2, 80:17–18 (III.15).

[85] *ACO* II.1.2, 80:29–81:6 (III.18–19). Bishop Atticus attempted to have the *Third Letter* and *Anathemas* formally recognized, but, tellingly, his request was ignored by the imperial officials: *ACO* II.1.2, 82:37–83:5 (III.29).

[86] The *Tomus* was introduced at *ACO* II.1.2, 81:20–2 (III.22).

way, then, the selection and ordering of the documents was intended to create a chain of orthodox pronouncements on the faith, all in harmony with one another, culminating in Leo's *Tomus*. In a sign of the tight imperial control over proceedings, the session ended with the bishops' continued protestations entirely ignored and the presiding officials declaring that the emperor's credal agenda would, regardless, be put into effect.[87]

It is in the foregoing context that we most likely locate the genesis of the *Adlocutio*—an undated address to the emperor Marcian, ascribed to 'the council', but without any further indication of its authorship or authority. Schwartz long ago demonstrated that Theodoret's hand may have lay behind it, but the unusual placement of this document immediately after the formal *acta* of the council led him to date it to after the *Definitio* had been composed.[88] As Price has convincingly argued, however, the *Adlocutio* knows nothing of a Definition, but is concerned rather to defend and commend the *Tomus*.[89] The document is thus better placed between the second session (at which some significant objections to the *Tomus* were raised) and the fourth session (when the *Tomus* was formally acclaimed as in concord with Nicaea).

The particular contribution of the *Adlocutio* to the idea of 'Nicaea' at Chalcedon was to provide a narrative of subsequent clarifications to the Nicene faith, in order to show that the *Tomus* was not innovatory, but rather stood in a noble tradition. Thus Leo 'followed the holy fathers, who in like manner confuted the heresies that sprung up in their time after the great council at Nicaea'.[90] Nicaea retained a clear primacy in the *Adlocutio*, but, crucially, the case was made for a range of subordinate credal formulations that, like 'resources of combat', were designed specifically to vanquish new heretical doctrines.[91] These documentary supplements, then, did not strictly add to the Creed—for the Creed possessed the fullness of truth for those who read it rightly—but rather corrected the false doctrines of those who sought to misrepresent it.[92] In this way, the *Adlocutio* tried to retain the affirmation of the Creed's complete sufficiency, while justifying the need for a 'second division' of later credal statements. Against the claims of Dioscorus, it could thus be contended that the prohibition on additions to Nicaea did not rule out subsequent expositions of the Nicene faith.[93] The unchanging Nicene faith

[87] *ACO* II.1.2, 84:5–6(III.45).

[88] *ACO* II.1.3, xiii–xv, followed by Sellers, *Chalcedon*, 125. Theodoret possessed influence with Anatolius, the lay chairman of the council: Ste. Croix, 'Chalcedon', 290–1.

[89] Price and Gaddis, *Chalcedon*, III, 105–7.

[90] *ACO* II.1.3, 110:13–15: *ἀλλὰ τοῖς ἁγίοις πατράσιν ἀκολουθῶν τοῖς καὶ μετὰ τὴν μεγάλην σύνοδον τὴν ἐν Νικαίαι τὰς κατὰ καιρὸν ἀναφυείσας αἱρέσεις ὁμοιοτρόπως ἐλέγξασιν.*

[91] *ACO* II.1.3, 110:27–8: *πρὸς δὲ τοὺς ἀντεροῦντας ποικίλαι τῶν ἀγώνων ἡμῖν ἀφορμαὶ παραδέδονται τοῖς ὑπ' αὐτῶν ψευδῶς ἐπαγομένοις παρὰ τῶν εὐσεβούντων προσαρμοζόμεναι.*

[92] *ACO* II.1.3, 110:23 ff.

[93] *ACO* II.1.3, 110:32–111:3, 112:24–9.

was, rather, being reapplied in the context of fresh controversies, and so expressed continuity with the past precisely through new forms of words.

It is a subtle thesis, which reveals how the recognition of documents like the *Tomus* could, with a bit of conceptual flexibility, be reconciled with the inherited shibboleths of Nicaea's unique authority. Indeed, the *Adlocutio* represents, in this sense, the partial retrieval of that older tradition of necessary credal supplementation that was noted in Basil of Caesarea's writings and in Theodore's *Catechetical Homilies*. Like these authors, for instance, the *Adlocutio* notes that the Nicene Creed's brief material on the Holy Spirit required a more thorough exegesis in response to the rise of the Pneumatomachians.[94] The *Adlocutio* thus provides a narrative in which the true meaning of the Creed is successively unfolded by the fathers (including Athanasius, Basil, Damasus, Cyril, and John of Antioch) in response to heretical innovations.[95] The *Adlocutio* was by no means, however, a consensus document, for the narrative clearly followed an Antiochene construal. It was the Formula of Reunion, for instance, that was singled out as the document in which Cyril set down his true beliefs; and the appended florilegium was intended to show that the fathers, like Leo, affirmed the two natures.[96]

Further evidence of the role of the *Adlocutio* in smoothing the path for the acceptance of the *Tomus* came in the fourth session. When the archdeacon Aetius intervened to counter those who refused to acknowledge the *Tomus* on the grounds that it added to Nicaea, he used precisely the same argument as the *Adlocutio*:

> The beliefs of this holy and great council accord with the expositions of the 318 holy fathers then assembled at Nicaea; this *σύμβολον* they uphold and teach to all those who come to them. But, in the meantime, discord was sown by certain people, and in opposition to this the holy fathers Cyril and Celestine, and now the most holy and blessed Pope Leo, issued letters to interpret the *σύμβολον* of faith, but without laying down a *πίστις* or *δόγμα*—these letters the whole oecumenical symbol welcomes and accepts, and transmits the interpretation they contain to those who desire to learn. Does your charity heed this decision of the entire holy council, and anathematize Nestorius and Eutyches as innovators, or not?[97]

[94] *ACO* II.1.3, 111:17ff. [95] *ACO* II.1.3, 112:29ff.

[96] *ACO* II.1, 113:12–15; 114:4ff.

[97] *ACO* II.1.2, 118:37–119:7 (IV.98): *Ἡ ἁγία αὕτη καὶ μεγάλη σύνοδος οὕτως πιστεύει ὡς οἱ τιη ἅγιοι πατέρες οἱ ἐν Νικαίαι τὸ τηνικαῦτα συνειλεγμένοι ἐξέθεντο καὶ τοῦτο τὸ σύμβολον αὐτοί τε φυλάττουσι καὶ πάντας τοὺς προσιόντας ἐκδιδάσκουσιν· ἐπειδὴ δὲ ἐν τῶι μεταξὺ διχόνοιαι παρὰ τινῶν ἀνεφύησαν καὶ πρὸς ταύτας ἀντιπαραταττόμενοι οἱ ἅγιοι πατέρες Κύριλλος καὶ Κελεστῖνος καὶ νῦν ὁ ἁγιώτατος καὶ μακαριώτατος πάπας Λέων ἐπιστολὰς ἑρμηνευούσας τὸ σύμβολον, οὐ πίστιν ἢ δόγμα ἐκτιθέμενοι, ἐκδεδώκασιν, ἃς ἀσμενίζει πᾶσα ἡ οἰκουμενικὴ σύνοδος καὶ συναινεῖ καὶ τὴν ἐκ τούτων ἑρμηνείαν παραδίδωσι τοῖς ἐπιθυμοῦσι μανθάνειν, καὶ ἡ ὑμετέρα ἀγάπη ταύτηι τῆι γνώμηι πάσης τῆς ἁγίας συνόδου πείθεται καὶ ἀναθεματίζει Νεστόριον καὶ Εὐτυχέα ὡς καινοφωνήσαντας ἢ οὔ.*

Here again, then, the *Tomus* was justified as a necessary and authoritative interpretation of the unique Nicene *σύμβολον* against the innovations of the heretics. Eutyches' appeal to Nicaea alone was thus not a sign of his fidelity to the Nicene faith, but precisely indicative of his departure from it. The innovators were not those who subscribed to the *Tomus* (and other such documents), but those who refused to do so. In this way, the Ephesine decree could be affirmed (insofar as it prohibited only credal *additions* to Nicaea, rather than clarificatory expositions), and Eutyches' and Dioscorus' avowedly 'Nicene' stance could be exposed as fraudulent. The *Tomus* could thus be incorporated into that elite group of approved commentaries on the Creed, following the precedent of Cyril's two letters. This construal also allowed the achievement of Ephesus I to be wrested back from Dioscorus' interpretation—for Cyril's council could now be portrayed not as decreeing the prohibition of authoritative expositions of Nicaea but as *legitimizing* the promulgation of such statements. On this basis, Eutyches' doctrine could be condemned as contrary to Nicaea through Leo's *Tomus* just as Nestorius' doctrine had been condemned as contrary to Nicaea through Cyril's *Second Letter*. The work of Chalcedon, it could thus be claimed, triumphantly completed that of Ephesus I.

We note, however, that the terminology for delineating this hierarchy of doctrinal pronoucements remained somewhat fluid in meaning. In Aetius' remarks above, *σύμβολον* and *πίστις* were used almost synonymously to denote the special authority of the Nicene Creed. At other points in the Chalcedonian *acta*, however, *πίστις* was deployed far more loosely—it could refer, for instance, to any significant written statement of orthodoxy, or to the Nicene faith in its broadest sense.[98] The meaning of *ἔκθεσις* was similarly plastic: during the fourth session it was used to describe the credal achievement of 325 in both the singular (the 'definition' of Nicaea) and the plural (the 'definitions' of Nicaea).[99] Alternatively, the *ἔκθεσις* of Nicaea could be set alongside the *ἔκθεσις* of Constantinople, or the singular *ἔκθεσις* be used to construe the creeds of the 318 and 150 holy fathers as one 'definition'.[100] This semantic elasticity, then, worked in favour of those who wished to argue that the Nicene 'faith' encompassed later documents, even if the lack of an agreed technical vocabulary still allowed their opponents to portray such attempts as advocating new 'creeds', and so as guilty of heretical innovation.

The evidence of episcopal statements in the fourth session, indeed, reveals how the 'narrative turn' in expressing the fullness of the faith of Nicaea allowed a range of subtly different construals of orthodoxy to be advanced. In an echo of the Ephesine session of 22 June, the bishops were required to

[98] For instance: *ACO* I.1.2, 95:29 (IV.9.17).

[99] For instance, in the singular: *ACO* I.1.2, 95:13 (IV.9.14); in the plural: *ACO* I.1.2, 94:22 (IV.9.5),

[100] For the former: *ACO* I.1.2, 98:32–6 (IV.9.42); for the latter: *ACO* I.1.2, 96:15–19 (IV.9.23).

affirm that the doctrine of the *Tomus* was in harmony with that of the Nicene Creed, and so formally to recognize the document as an authoritative exposition of the Nicene faith. This necessitated each bishop articulating how he understood the precise standing of the *Tomus* in relation to Nicaea, and to other councils and dogmatic formulae. Marcian, as noted above, had already given his account of Nicene orthodoxy, but the subsequent 161 episcopal contributions do not simply parrot that imperial construal mindlessly. Indeed, far from making for 'singularly monotonous reading', these statements actually reveal a wide range of perspectives concerning the idea of 'Nicaea', and the underlying prioritization of particular conciliar, credal, and textual authorities.[101]

Following, then, the similar procedure of 22 June 431, the bishops were invited to 'state if the *ἔκθεσις* of the 318 fathers who met formerly at Nicaea, and of the 150 who convened subsequently in the imperial city, is in harmony with the letter of the most devout Archbishop Leo'.[102] We note again the prominent role given to the Constantinopolitan Creed in this construal, as a necessary part of the full confession of the fathers of Nicaea, and, as the standard against which Leo's *Tomus* was to be judged. The fact that almost every bishop also included Cyril's council and his writings in their ensuing accounts of Nicene orthodoxy is testament to the dominance of the memory of Cyril (and that of Ephesus I) at Chalcedon.

A number of episcopal responses substantially downplayed, or even omitted, the elements of this idea of 'Nicaea' with which they were not comfortable. The abiding lukewarmness of some bishops towards the *Tomus* was evident from the statement of the representative of Maras of Codrula, which begrudgingly conceded that Leo's letter was 'not discordant in meaning' with the faith of Nicaea, Constantinople, and Ephesus.[103] In other cases, a similar strategy of minimal affirmation was employed with regard to the Constantinopolitan Creed, for instance that the statement 'of the 150 is in no way in disharmony with the aforesaid creed [of Nicaea]'.[104] Occasionally, the Constantinopolitan Creed was simply omitted entirely.[105]

[101] *Contra* Price and Gaddis, *Chalcedon,* II, 118. The bishops had been asked to draw up statements of faith at the end of the first session (*ACO* II.1.1, 195:34–5 [I.1072]), so they had been given time to mull the issue over.

[102] *ACO* II.1.2, 93:37–94:3 (IV.8): *ἕκαστος τῶν συνελθόντων εὐλαβεστάτων ἐπισκόπων διδαξάτω εἴ γε ἡ ἔκθεσις τῶν τιη πατέρων τῶν ἐν Νικαίαι πάλαι συνελθόντων καὶ τῶν μετὰ ταῦτα ρν ἐν τῆι βασιλευούσηι πόλει συναθροισθέντων συμφωνεῖ τῆι ἐπιστολῆι τοῦ εὐλαβεστάτου ἀρχιεπισκόπου Λέοντος.*

[103] *ACO* II.1.2, 98:9–12 (IV.9.37): *ὡς ἡ ἐπιστολὴ ἡ γραφεῖσα παρὰ τοῦ θεοφιλεστάτου καὶ ἁγιωτάτου ἀρχιεπισκόπου ἡμῶν τῆς Ῥωμαίων Λέοντος οὐκ ἀπάιδει ὅσον πρὸς ἔννοιαν, τῆι ἐκτεθείσηι πίστει παρά τε τῶν τιη ἁγίων πατέρων τῶν ἐν Νικαίαι συνελθόντων καὶ παρὰ τῶν ρν τῶν ἐν Κωνσταντινουπόλει συνδραμόντων, ἔτι μὴν καὶ τῶν ἐν Ἐφέσωι.*

[104] *ACO* II.1.2, 102:23–5 (IV.9.98): *Τὴν τῶν ἁγίων πατέρων τῶν τιη πίστιν σωτηρίαν ἡμετέραν οὖσαν καὶ φυλάττομεν καὶ μετὰ ταύτης ἐξελθεῖν τὸν βίον εὐχόμεθα, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἡ τῶν ρν κατ᾽ οὐδένα τρόπον τῆς προειρημένης πίστεως ἀσύμφωνός ἐστι.*

[105] For instance, *ACO* II.1.2, 95:5–8 (IV.9.12).

Most strikingly of all, there were evidently some bishops who continued to regard Cyril's council of 431 as illegitimate, and so pointedly ignored it in their genealogy of orthodoxy. Two bishops present at the fourth session of Chalcedon had been members of the Antiochene *conciliabulum* of twenty years before: Polychronius of Epiphaneia and Theodoret of Cyrus.[106] Polychronius referred neither to Ephesus I nor to Cyril, but simply affirmed that the *Tomus* was in harmony with Nicaea, while Theodoret similarly omitted Ephesus I, and referred only obliquely to the letters of Cyril.[107] As late as 451, then, there remained a small minority opposed to the reception of Ephesus I as a true council.

Another episcopal strategy was to emphasize certain elements of the Nicene construal. Seleucus of Amasia, for instance, dramatically foregrounded the authority of Cyril as the primary interpreter of the Nicene tradition, declaring: 'we have found that the conciliar letters of our most sacred father Cyril are in harmony with the faith defined by the 318 holy fathers, and likewise we have found that the letter of the most holy Archbishop Leo accords with the 318 and with the teaching of the most holy Cyril'.[108] Seleucus also here carefully tailored the character of Cyril's theological legacy by specifying that it was his 'conciliar letters' (the *Second Letter*, and the *Laetentur Caeli*) that he regarded as authoritative. Other bishops, by contrast, chose to refer only to the letter (singular) of Cyril (i.e. the *Second Letter*), precisely to avoid having to acknowledge the doctrine of the *Laetentur Caeli* (which did not, after all, actually possess a 'conciliar' authority).[109]

There evidently remained, indeed, a question over the precise role of Ephesus I in the genealogy of orthodoxy: did it contribute to the idea of 'Nicaea' fundamentally as a conciliar event in its own right (whose achievement was authoritatively expressed in its written *acta*), or as the means by which Cyril's writings were formally recognized as Nicene? Bishop Pergamius took the former approach, locating the achievement of Ephesus in the catholic faith of those who gathered for the council,[110] while Bishop Cecropius chose the second option, making Ephesus I a mere mouthpiece for Cyril's teaching.[111] Bishop Eupithius went one stage further, and simply affirmed Cyril's *Second Letter* without even rooting it in the conciliar context of 431.[112]

[106] They were present, for instance, at the Easterners' session of 26 June 431: *ACO* I.1.5, 123 (V.151.16).

[107] *ACO* II.1.2, 98:27–31 (IV.9.41), 104:1–7 (IV.9.117).

[108] *ACO* II.1.2, 95:5–8 (IV.9.12): *Συμφώνους τῆι ἐκτεθείσηι πίστει τῶν τιη ἁγίων πατέρων τὰς συνοδικὰς ἐπιστολὰς τοῦ ὁσιωτάτου πατρὸς ἡμῶν Κυρίλλου εὑρήκαμεν, ὁμοίως δὲ συνάιδουσαν τοῖς τε τιη καὶ τοῖς παρὰ τοῦ ἁγιωτάτου Κυρίλλου τὴν ἐπιστολὴν τοῦ ἁγιωτάτου ἀρχιεπισκόπου Λέοντος εὑρήκαμεν.*

[109] For instance: *ACO* II.1.2, 99:3–7 (IV.9.44), 103:37–41 (IV.9.116).

[110] *ACO* II.1.2, 95:27–31 (IV.9.17), cf. *ACO* II.1.2, 98:37–99:2 (IV.9.43), 101:7–11 (IV.9.53).

[111] *ACO* II.1.2, 98:32–6 (IV.9.42). [112] *ACO* II.1.2, 108:16–19 (IV.9.151).

The episcopal responses also wrestled with how to express the unique standing of Nicaea at the same time as affirming subsequent authorities. Some statements retained a clear priority for Nicaea. Bishop Sabas, for instance, began by emphasizing that in defining the faith, the 318 holy fathers of Nicaea assembled 'by the will of God, and were instructed by the Holy Spirit'.[113] Sabas then simply recognized the fathers of Constantinople, and Cyril and Leo, as in harmony with their teaching.[114] In such accounts, then, the orthodox faith *is* Nicaea, and everything else is but commentary upon it. Bishop Romanus, by contrast, confessed that such a model was now inadequate—he could not simply affirm Leo's *Tomus* and Cyril's *Second Letter* as in harmony with Nicaea, since 'the holy and oecumenical council of Nicaea did not discuss these matters'.[115]

Other statements tried to have their cake and eat it, juxtaposing the uniqueness of Nicaea and the authority of later pronouncements in an awkward fashion. Theodosius of Canatha, for instance, affirmed that 'the *πίστις* of the 318 is unshakeable', but then immediately explained that he also believed and followed 'the *ἔκθεσις* defined by the 150 holy fathers who met at Constantinople, and that made at Ephesus'.[116] As we have seen, terminological fluidity assisted in this manoeuvre—some bishops, for instance, applied vocabulary particularly associated with Nicaea (such as *σύμβολον*) to the Constantinopolitan Creed.[117]

Bishop Maximus provided yet another variation, describing how he had found Leo's *Tomus* to be in accord with the definitions of the 318 at Nicaea, the 150 at Constantinople, and with the faith defined at Ephesus.[118] Here the orthodox past was being flattened out, and Nicaea's place of primacy was being subtly relativized, as merely one of several historical expressions of the authentic faith. Bishop Eudoxius, in like manner, could describe the faith as established at three successive (or even cumulative) moments: 'by the 318 holy fathers at Nicaea, by the 150 who assembled at Constantinople, and by the

[113] *ACO* II.1.2, 97:3–5 (IV.9.28): *Οἱ τιη ἅγιοι πατέρες συναχθέντες κατὰ γνώμην θεοῦ εἰς Νίκαιαν καὶ διδαχθέντες ἀπὸ πνεύματος ἁγίου τὴν ὀρθὴν πίστιν ἡμῶν ἐξέθεντο.*

[114] *ACO* II.1.2, 97:5–10 (IV.9.28).

[115] *ACO* II.1.2, 105:38–42 (IV.9.131): *Ὅτι αἱ δύο ἐπιστολαί, τουτέστι τοῦ τῆς ὁσίας μνήμης Κυρίλλου καὶ τοῦ εὐλαβεστάτου ἀρχιεπισκόπου Λέοντος συνῳδὰ λέγουσι, συντίθημι, ἡ δὲ ἐν Νικαίαι ἁγία καὶ οἰκουμενικὴ σύνοδος περὶ τοιούτων οὐκ ἔσχεν διάλεξιν. πᾶσι δὲ τοῖς παρ' αὐτῆς ἐκτεθεῖσι καὶ ἐμμένομεν καὶ στοιχοῦμεν καὶ οὔτε ὑφελεῖν οὔτε προσθεῖναι δυνάμεθα.*

[116] *ACO* II.1.2, 96:38–97:2 (IV.9.27): *Ἀσάλευτος ἡ πίστις τῶν τιη· ἐάν τις ἐπιχειρήσηι σαλεῦσαι τὰ ἀσάλευτα, σαλεύεται καὶ μὴ σαλεύων τὰ ἀσάλευτα. ταύτηι γοῦν ἀκολουθοῦμεν καὶ πιστεύομεν καὶ τῆι ἐκθέσει τῆι ἐκτεθείσηι παρὰ τῶν ρν ἁγίων πατέρων τῶν συνελθόντων ἐν Κωνσταντινουπόλει καὶ τῆι ἐν Ἐφέσωι κατὰ τοῦ δυσσεβοῦς Νεστορίου γενομένηι ἐπὶ τοῦ τῆς μακαρίας μνήμης Κυρίλλου, καὶ συνάιδει ἡ ἐπιστολὴ τοῦ ἁγιωτάτου ἀρχιεπισκόπου καὶ πατρὸς ἡμῶν Λέοντος, καὶ ὑπέγραψα ἐν αὐτῆι.*

[117] For instance: *ACO* II.1.2, 98:27–31 (IV.9.41); *ACO* II.1.2, 106:1–10 (IV.9.102).

[118] *ACO* II.1.2, 94:21–5 (IV.9.5), cf. *ACO* II.1.2, 94:39–95:4 (IV.9.11).

holy council that took place at Ephesus under the leadership of the most sacred bishop Cyril'.[119]

The growing narrativization of the idea of 'Nicaea' also began to expose significantly different trajectories in construing the orthodox past. Was orthodoxy to be understood primarily through the writings of individual church fathers (a 'patristic' trajectory), or through the collective pronouncements of the bishops in council (a 'conciliar' trajectory), or through a particular selection of doctrinal formularies (a 'credal' trajectory)? Was the special authority of Cyril's writings intrinsic, or conferred by conciliar endorsement? In short, if orthodoxy was no longer to be solely identified with Nicaea alone, but rather with a succession of moments at which the faith was authoritatively expressed, were those moments primarily patristic, conciliar, or credal?

In some of the episcopal responses, a clearly conciliar narrative is given, in which the assembled bishops of Nicaea, Constantinople, and Ephesus I each expounded the faith.[120] Such conciliar genealogies, of course, were also a means to re-narrate the orthodox past so as to oppose Dioscorus' rival 'three councils' narrative (Nicaea, Ephesus I, and Ephesus II). In other responses, certain fathers (especially Cyril and Leo) are privileged as the means by which the voice of orthodoxy is heard, irrespective of a conciliar association.[121] In still others, it is a succession of texts that is emphasized. Fontianus, for instance, pledges his assent to 'the creed issued by the most holy fathers at Nicaea and by the 150 in the all-fortunate city who defined the same faith', and to 'the letter from the most holy Cyril of sacred memory', and so to 'the missive of our blessed father Leo'.[122]

To conclude, then, the early sessions of Chalcedon witnessed an ambitious imperial attempt to commend to the assembled bishops a fresh solution to the problem of 'Nicaea'. By harnessing the authority of an oecumenical council, Marcian presented the bishops' activity as the completion of the work of Nicaea itself: a second Nicene Council issuing a new Nicene statement of faith. By re-narrating the Nicene past to include the contribution of

[119] *ACO* II.1.2, 97:26–30 (IV.9.32): *Ἡ πίστις τεθεμελίωται ἥνπερ οἱ τιη ἐν τῆι Νικαίαι ἐστήριξαν ἅγιοι πατέρες καὶ οἱ ρν συναχθέντες ἐν Κωνσταντινουπόλει καὶ ἡ ἐν Ἐφέσωι γενομένη ἁγία σύνοδος ἡγουμένου τοῦ ὁσιωτάτου ἐπισκόπου Κυρίλλου, ἧιπερ συνάιδει καὶ ἡ ἐπιστολὴ τοῦ ἁγιωτάτου ἀρχιεπισκόπου τῆς Ῥωμαίων Λέοντος, ἐν ἧι καὶ ὑπέγραψα*, cf. *ACO* II.1.2, 97:37–42 (IV.9.35).

[120] For instance: *ACO* II.1.2, 95:37–41 (IV.9.19), 95:42–96:3 (IV.9.20), 104:22–9 (IV.9.120).

[121] For instance: *ACO* II.1.2, 95:5–8 (IV.9.12), 95:12–16 (IV.9.14), 97:3–10 (IV.9.28). The authority of Cyril is often referred to without any reference to Ephesus I, for instance: *ACO* II.1.2, 99:36–40 (IV.9.50), 104:8–15 (IV.9.118), 105:3–7 (IV.9.124), 106:18–22 (IV.9.134), 107:22–6 (IV.9.144).

[122] *ACO* II.1.2, 106:23–8 (IV.9.135): *Ἐκ πολλῶν ὅσων ἐμαυτὸν πληροφορήσας συνάιδειν τὰ ἐπισταλέντα παρὰ τοῦ μακαριωτάτου ἡμῶν πατρὸς Λέοντος τῶι συμβόλωι τῶι ἐκτεθέντι παρὰ τῶν ἁγιωτάτων πατέρων τῶν ἐν Νικαίαι καὶ τῶν ρν τῶν ἐν τῆι πανευδαίμονι πόλει τὴν αὐτὴν ἐκθεμένων πίστιν καὶ τῆι ἐπιστολῆι τῆι παρὰ τοῦ τῆς ὁσίας μνήμης ἁγιωτάτου ἐπισκόπου Κυρίλλου γενομένου τῆς Ἀλεξανδρέων μεγαλοπόλεως καὶ συναινέσας ὑπέγραψα*, cf. *ACO* II.1.2, 104:36–40 (IV.9.122), 105:7–12 (IV.9.125), 105:19–22 (IV.9.127).

Constantinople 381, Marcian provided a precedent for further credal statements, and so blunted the force of 'Canon 7' by reinterpreting it as prohibiting only statements contrary to, rather than additional to, the Nicene Creed. By modelling his conciliar proceedings on 22 June 431, Marcian smoothed the path for the formal recognition of Leo's *Tomus* as a further authoritative exposition of the faith of Nicaea, just as Cyril's *Second Letter* had been at Ephesus I. By promoting a carefully 'select' Cyril (the Cyril of the 'two conciliar letters'), Marcian ensured that the theological legacy associated with the *Anathemas*, and advanced at Ephesus II as the authentic faith of Nicaea, was ruled as illegitimate. By allowing Eutyches' and Dioscorus' intransigent supporters to be heard at length, Marcian revealed how problematic the simple confession of 'Nicaea' or 'Nicaea and Ephesus' had become: the inherited cyphers of orthodoxy were no longer sufficient, for they had become shields for heretics, and the means to frustrate rather than promote the fresh articulation of the unchanging faith of Nicaea.

We have also noted, however, that Marcian's agenda met with substantial opposition at the council, precisely because it was seen as violating Nicaea's unique status. The evidence of the *Adlocutio* suggests that, for some, their objections could be overcome through the recovery of an older narrative of necessary credal supplementation, as long as it was combined (however incongruously) with the reiteration of comforting shibboleths of Nicaea's sole sufficiency. The episcopal responses of the fourth session, finally, reveal a further dimension to the controversy: namely, that Marcian's 'narrative turn' had opened up a fresh set of ambiguities regarding the construal of the idea of Nicaea. Were the authoritative pronouncements of the orthodox past expressed primarily (or even solely) through patristic, credal, or conciliar loci? Was the council of Nicaea a unique instantiation of the true faith, or merely one among many, the first in a long line? Indeed, these unresolved tensions similarly mark the great product of the council's labours—the *Definitio* itself. It is to this document, and to the complex nature of its initial reception, that we now turn.

THE DEFINITION AND ITS INITIAL RECEPTION

Having been shaped by a small committee of bishops set up at the second session, and subjected to a number of revisions during the fifth session, the *Definitio* was finally promulgated, in Marcian's presence and with great ceremony, at Chalcedon's climactic sixth session.[123] The *acta* here once again suggest a self-conscious attempt to present the council as a glorious second

[123] Cf. *ACO* II.1.2, 78:25–31 (III.6), 123:20–3 (V.8), 123:37–124:13 (V.12), 125:26–126:6 (V.29).

Nicaea, establishing lasting peace and concord through a new statement of faith. In addition to the repeated episcopal acclamations of Marcian and Pulcheria as the new Constantine and Helena[124], Marcian's formal address to the council draws an explicit parallel between the events of 325 and 451:

> just as at the most sacred council of the fathers at Nicaea the faith when manifested freed men from error, and when brought to light was recognized by all, so now likewise, through your council, every doubt that has been generated in this short time (as we have said, by the wickedness and instability of some) may be eradicated, and your judgements may be observed for ever.[125]

These words suggest that, for Marcian, Chalcedon had not merely confirmed the faith of Nicaea, but had decisively contributed to it; Chalcedon had not simply looked back to Nicaea, but was itself a distinct conciliar moment in an ongoing narrative of orthodoxy; Chalcedon had not just acknowledged that the decisions of Nicaea were of lasting value, but had rather established that its own judgements should be observed for ever. In addition, the *Definitio* was lauded by the assembled bishops in terms usually reserved exclusively for the Nicene Creed: it was unerring,[126] it contained everything,[127] it had been dictated by the Holy Spirit,[128] it had so perfectly expressed the orthodox faith that not to subscribe to it was automatically to be a heretic,[129] and so on. It is no wonder, then, that Chalcedon has traditionally been interpreted as a watershed in the dethronement of Nicaea from its unique conciliar and credal position.[130]

The evidence at hand, however, suggests a rather more complex picture. For, despite the probable exaggeration of the bishops' enthusiasm for the *Definitio* in the *acta*,[131] and the heavy imperial pressure for assent,[132] it still remains unlikely that the brazen imposition of a 'new creed' would have been able to secure widespread episcopal approval at the council. Rather, the text of

[124] *ACO* II.1.2, 139:22–4 (VI.3), 140:27–30 (VI.5), 155:12–13 (VI.11), 155:25–6 (VI.11); and by Marcian himself at 140:10–13 (VI.4).

[125] *ACO* II.1.2, 140:19–24 (VI.4): *ψυχῆι καθάπερ ἐν τῆι Νικαέων ὁσιωτάτηι τῶν πατέρων συνόδωι φανερωθεῖσα ἡ πίστις πλάνης μὲν ἠλευθέρωσεν τοὺς ἀνθρώπους, εἰς φῶς δὲ προαχθεῖσα πᾶσιν ἐγνώσθη, παραπλησίως καὶ νῦν διὰ τῆς ὑμετέρας συνόδου πᾶν μὲν ἀμφίβολον ἐν τῶι ὀλίγωι τούτωι χρόνωι τεχθέν, καθὼς ἔφημεν, φαυλότητι τινῶν καὶ ἀπληστίαι περικοπῆι, εἰς ἀεὶ δὲ τὰ παρ' ὑμῶν δικαιούμενα φυλαχθείη*; cf. the Latin version of the address: *ACO* II.3, 409–10.

[126] *ACO* II.1.2, 141:2 (VI.6).

[127] *ACO* II.1.2, 124:28–9 (V.20).

[128] *ACO* II.1.2, 124:9 (V.12).

[129] *ACO* II.1.2, 124:10 (V.12).

[130] For instance: Sieben, *Konzilsidee,* 250–63.

[131] The official record of the fifth session, in particular, has been carefully tailored to present the bishops as more supportive of the *Definitio* than they actually were—a number of episcopal objections to its doctrinal content, for instance, appear to have been deliberately omitted: cf. *ACO* II.1.2, 123:9–10 (V.4), 123:37–8 (V.12). Price and Gaddis note that the sheer brevity of the proceedings here is itself suspicious (Price and Gaddis, *Chalcedon*, II, 184).

[132] During the fifth session, for example, Marcian had to threaten to move the council to the West in order to break the episcopal deadlock: *ACO* II.1.2, 124:37–125:8. Objections were also later raised that violence had been used at the sixth session in order to force some bishops to sign (cf. Ps.-Zach., *H.E.* III.1).

the *Definitio* itself, and the manner of its earliest reception, reveal that a prominent, even central, place for Nicaea was retained, and that traditional Nicene shibboleths were reaffirmed—even if such affirmations jostled somewhat awkwardly alongside Marcian's ambitious attempt to formulate the faith afresh.

The paragraph of Christological reflection often mistakenly referred to as the 'Chalcedonian Definition' in fact represented only a small part of the full statement approved by the council. The bulk of the *Definitio*, indeed, was devoted not to the precise delineation of Christ's person and natures but rather to the articulation of a reconfigured account of the Nicene past, in which the particular contribution of Chalcedon could be meaningfully situated. Crucially, at several points in this construal, Nicaea's primacy was strongly emphasized. The text of the Nicene Creed was quoted in full (with anathemas), with the explanation that 'this wise and saving *σύμβολον* of divine grace sufficed for the perfect knowledge and confirmation of piety, since on the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit its teaching is complete'.[133]

Similarly, the contribution of Constantinople was hedged around with nervy reassertions of Nicaea's sufficiency: in composing their own creed, the fathers of Constantinople were explicitly not thereby 'inserting something omitted by their predecessors'.[134] Indeed, a clear distinction was made between 'the *pre-eminence* of the exposition of the correct and irreproachable faith by the 318 holy and blessed fathers', and the '*validity* of the definition of the 150 holy fathers at Constantinople'.[135] The primary stated purpose of the *Definitio* was, strikingly, not to establish a new account of orthodoxy, but rather to decree 'first and foremost that the Creed of the 318 holy fathers is to remain inviolate'.[136]

[133] *ACO* II.1.2, 128:15–28 (V.34): *Ἤρκει μὲν οὖν εἰς ἐντελῆ τῆς εὐσεβείας ἐπίγνωσίν τε καὶ βεβαίωσιν τὸ σοφὸν καὶ σωτήριον τοῦτο τῆς θείας χάριτος σύμβολον· περί τε γὰρ τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος ἐκδιδάσκει τὸ τέλειον καὶ τοῦ κυρίου τὴν ἐνανθρώπησιν τοῖς πιστῶς δεχομένοις παρίστησιν*. As Schwartz argued, the difference between the textual forms of the Nicene and Constantinopolitan Creeds in the *Definitio* compared to the 'pure' forms cited in the second session may reflect a deliberate attempt to make the credal texts fit the construal the *Definitio* was advancing, namely, that the fathers of 381 had simply added to the Nicene Creed material on the Holy Spirit: E. Schwartz (1926), 'Das Nicaenum und das Constantinopolitanum auf der Synode Chalkedon', *ZNW* 25, esp. 76–78; cf. S. G. Hall (1997), 'Past Creeds and Present Formula at the Council of Chalcedon', *SCH* 33, 19–29.

[134] *ACO* II.1.2, 129:1–6 (V.34): *καὶ διὰ μὲν τοὺς τῶι πνεύματι τῶι ἁγίωι μαχομένους τὴν χρόνοις ὕστερον παρὰ τῶν ἐπὶ τῆς βασιλευούσης πόλεως ρν συνελθόντων πατέρων περὶ τῆς τοῦ πνεύματος οὐσίας παραδοθεῖσαν διδασκαλίαν κυροῖ, ἣν ἐκεῖνοι πᾶσιν ἐγνώρισαν οὐχ ὥς τι λεῖπον τοῖς προλαβοῦσιν ἐπεισάγοντες, ἀλλὰ τὴν περὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος αὐτῶν ἔννοιαν κατὰ τῶν τὴν αὐτοῦ δεσποτείαν ἀθετεῖν πειρωμένων γραφικαῖς μαρτυρίαις τρανώσαντες* [...].

[135] *ACO* II.1.2, 127:4–7 (V.31): *προλάμπειν μὲν τῆς ὀρθῆς καὶ ἀμωμήτου πίστεως τὴν ἔκθεσιν τῶν τιη ἁγίων καὶ μακαρίων πατέρων τῶν ἐν Νικαίαι ἐπὶ τοῦ τῆς εὐσεβοῦς μνήμης Κωνσταντί-ωνσταντίνου τοῦ γενομένου βασιλέως συναχθέντων, κρατεῖν δὲ καὶ τὰ παρὰ τῶν ρν ἁγίων πατέρων ἐν Κωνσταντινουπόλει ὁρισθέντα* [...].

[136] *ACO* II.1.2, 128:23–129:1 (V.34): *διὰ τοῦτο πᾶσαν αὐτοῖς ἀποκλεῖσαι κατὰ τῆς ἀληθείας μηχανὴν βουλομένη ἡ παροῦσα νῦν αὕτη ἁγία καὶ μεγάλη καὶ οἰκουμενικὴ σύνοδος τὸ τοῦ*

It was surely this emphatic deployment of traditional Nicene tropes in the *Definitio* that was decisive in winning the wavering bishops around, sweeting the pill of Marcian's unpalatable agenda just enough to secure for it broad episcopal consent. In making this tactical concession, however, did Marcian thus render incoherent the contribution of the *Definitio*, by throwing together fundamentally divergent accounts of Nicaea's status and sufficiency? Again, the evidence does not allow such a straightforward conclusion to be drawn. For, despite the undoubted tensions regarding the idea of 'Nicaea' present in the *Definitio*, there does appear to be an attempt to articulate a distinctive account of the Nicene faith. Like the *Adlocutio*, the faith of Nicaea is presented in terms of a narrative of the orthodox past, in which the contribution of Nicaea is neither *merely* repeated at subsequent points in time nor usurped or dispensed with altogether, but is rather expounded anew in response to particular doctrinal controversies. The Nicene Creed thus indeed contains all truth, but requires later expositions or reformulations of its teaching to render that truth meaningful in new contexts. On this account, subsequent authoritative conciliar events and formulae are not *mere* commentaries on the Creed—as if they could just as easily be ignored or omitted—but are strictly *necessary* if one is to grasp the authentic faith of Nicaea aright in the present. Nicaea 'speaks' not by means of a kind of ahistorical ecclesiastical ventriloquism, whereby the Church simply mouths the same words time after time—rather, Nicaea's voice is to be heard precisely in and through the historically conditioned particularity of its later 're-receptions'.

In this way, then, the *Definitio* presented the fathers of Constantinople (whose Creed was also cited in full) as 'uprooting the heresies that had then sprung up',[137] and so as having 'set their seal upon the same faith'.[138] It likewise affirmed the 'conciliar letters of the blessed Cyril' against Nestorius' heretical teaching, precisely because those documents were authoritative guides 'for the instruction of those who with pious zeal seek the meaning of the saving creed'.[139] Leo's *Tomus* was also named and recognized, but afforded a distinctly lesser role, as useful for the 'removal of the malice of Eutyches' rather than for any positive contribution to the interpretation of the Nicene Creed.[140] Perhaps most remarkably of all, in upholding 'all the decrees of the

κηρύγματος ἄνωθεν ἀσάλευτον ἐκδιδάσκουσα ὥρισεν προηγουμένως τῶν τιη ἁγίων πατέρων τὴν πίστιν μένειν ἀπαρεγχείρητον.

[137] *ACO* II.1.2, 127:7 (V.31): *πρὸς ἀναίρεσιν μὲν τῶν τότε φυεισῶν αἱρέσεων* [...].

[138] *ACO* II.1.2, 126:25–127:1: *αὐτοὶ τὴν αὐτὴν ἐπισφραγισάμενοι πίστιν* [...].

[139] *ACO* II.1.2, 129:8–11 (V.34): *τὰς τοῦ μακαρίου Κυρίλλου τοῦ τῆς Ἀλεξανδρέων ἐκκλησίας γενομένου ποιμένος συνοδικὰς ἐπιστολὰς πρός τε Νεστόριον καὶ πρὸς τοὺς τῆς Ἀνατολῆς ἁρμοδίας οὔσας ἐδέξατο εἰς ἔλεγχον μὲν τῆς Νεστορίου φρενοβλαβείας, ἑρμηνείαν δὲ τῶν εὐσεβεῖ ζήλωι τοῦ σωτηρίου συμβόλου ποθούντων τὴν ἔννοιαν* [...].

[140] *ACO* II.1.2, 129:14 (V.34): *ἐπ᾽ ἀναιρέσει τῆς Εὐτυχοῦς κακονοίας* [...].

faith' of Ephesus I,[141] the *Definitio* concluded by reaffirming the Ephesine decree of 22 July 431, whose prohibition of the composition of any creed other than that of Nicaea had been so powerfully exploited by Dioscorus.[142] Since the preceding documents had been construed as authentically expounding the faith of Nicaea, rather than adding to its teaching, the Ephesine decree now posed no threat. In this way, the *Definitio* had acted to legitimize further doctrinal definition, undermining the Ephesine attempt to prohibit such activity—and, with this achieved, the legacy of 'Canon 7' could be safely reintegrated into the tradition.

In short, the grand imperial claims of a second Nicaea promulgating a new statement of faith were not straightforwardly reflected in the text of the *Definitio*, which in places enthusiastically reaffirmed the inherited tropes of Nicaea's unique authority and sole sufficiency. At the same time, however, it has been contended that a more nuanced construal of the character of the Nicene faith can be identified, in which the fullness of the truth of Nicaea could only be authentically expressed through subsequent authoritative documentary expositions. By providing a narrative of the orthodox past, the inescapably time-bound nature of the Nicene Creed was brought to the fore, and so rendered the mere repetition of its syllables inadequate in the face of new heresies and fresh controversies. As in Cyril's Ephesine *acta*, then, we discover a notion (to employ Rush's phrase) of rejuvenating reception, in which the truth of Nicaea neither is simply repeated nor unfolds organically and progressively over time, but is rather re-presented at particular moments of crisis, in response to particular questions, and so expresses genuine continuity with the past precisely through reformulation and modification. In this way, as the *Definitio* put it, Chalcedon thus 'renewed the unerring faith of the fathers'.[143]

The earliest reception of the *Definitio*, however, suggests that the subtlety of this construal was to some degree lost as, in response to the ferocious miaphysite attacks upon the council, Marcian further minimized Chalcedon's distinctive achievement. Amidst accusations that Chalcedon had undermined Nicaea's unique status by canonizing a new creed, Marcian emphasized that Chalcedon had reaffirmed the unchanging faith of Nicaea.[144] In writing to the enraged monks of Alexandria, he omitted Constantinople 381 from

[141] *ACO* II.1.2, 127:1–2 (V.31): […] *ὁρίζομεν τοίνυν τὴν τάξιν καὶ τοὺς περὶ τῆς πίστεως ἅπαντας τύπους φυλάττοντες καὶ ἡμεῖς τῆς κατ' Ἔφεσον πάλαι γεγενημένης ἁγίας συνόδου* […]

[142] *ACO* II.1.2, 130:4–11 (V.34). Severus later accused Chalcedon of thus reapplying the Ephesine decree to prohibit additions to the *Definitio* itself, but Basil of Seleucia (amongst others) recognized at the time that the decree was being used simply to reaffirm the unique status of Nicaea (*ACO* II.5, 46–9; Sellers, *Chalcedon*, 227).

[143] *ACO* II.1.2, 126:21–2 (V.31): *τὴν δὲ ἀπλανῆ τῶν πατέρων ἀνανεωσάμενοι πίστιν* […].

[144] For instance, in Marcian's second and fourth edicts confirming Chalcedon: *ACO* II.2, 115–16 (13 March 452); *ACO* II.3, 350 (18 July 452).

his conciliar narrative altogether, despite the central role it had played in justifying Chalcedon's role in defining the Nicene faith.[145] Indeed, since the Alexandrians held Ephesus I in such high regard, Marcian depicted Chalcedon as simply completing Cyril's earlier conciliar work: just as Ephesus had condemned the error of Nestorius, so Chalcedon had condemned the equal but opposite error of Eutyches.[146] In this way, Marcian sought to defend Chalcedon from the charge of innovation by claiming that it had only done what previous councils had done, namely, it had reasserted Nicaea's special authority by formally condemning those errors that had sprung up against its teaching. The particular contribution of the *Definitio* was thus largely lost from view, submerged beneath a sea of hastily reasserted Nicene tropes.

The same tendency towards a 'minimal' reception of Chalcedon is evident from the episcopal responses collected in the *Codex Encyclius* of 457/8.[147] In almost every case, Chalcedon was accepted, but it was Nicaea that remained central. The teaching of Chalcedon was recognized as authoritative, but only because it accorded with that of Nicaea. There was hardly any meaningful engagement with the doctrinal contribution of the *Definitio*—instead, the achievement of the council was consistently reduced to the mere confirmation of the Nicene faith against the heresy of Eutyches, just as Ephesus I had done against the heresy of Nestorius. So, for instance, the pro-Chalcedonian bishops of Egypt described how Chalcedon 'confirmed the venerable faith of Nicaea, as we said, the sign of salvation, and set unshakeable borders upon it, as the grace of the Holy Spirit dictated, and established a form through which it might completely deny every addition and diminution against the correct confession'.[148] The bishops of Armenia I similarly testified that they regarded the 'definition by the holy council of Chalcedon not as a symbol of faith, but as a definition placed to disrupt the Nestorian madness and to exclude those who are known to deny the salvation of the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ'.[149]

[145] *ACO* II.1, 488–9.

[146] For instance, in Marcian's edict of 13 March 452: *ACO* II.2, 115–16. Marcian's focus on Chalcedon's condemnation of Eutyches' doctrine (rather than miaphysitism more broadly) was shrewd, since both Dioscorus and the Egyptian bishops had already distanced themselves from the archimandrite's teaching; cf. *ACO* II.1.1, 92:18–24 (I.168), II.1.2, 111:39–9 (IV.31); Ps.-Zach., *H.E.* III.1.

[147] *ACO* II.5, 9–98; cf. T. von Schnitzler (1938), *Im Kampfe um Chalcedon: Geschichte und Inhalt des Codex Encyclius von 458* (Rome: Gregorian University), esp. 84–104; A. Grillmeier (1987), *Christ in Christian Tradition II: From the Council of Chalcedon (451) to Gregory the Great (590–604)* (London: Mowbray), I, 195–235.

[148] *ACO* II.5, 12:33–6: confirmans autem venerabilis Nicaenae fidei, sicut diximus, symbolum salutare et figens inevulsibiles terminus super eam, sicut gratia spiritus sancti dictabat, formamque constituit per quam omnem adjectionem, omnem imminutionem adversus confessionem rectam penitus abnegavit; cf. for similar responses *ACO* II.5, 18:26–9, 25:34–26:1, 27:7–9, 43:24–33, 52:29–31.

[149] *ACO* II.5, 70:15–21: igitur indicamus prolatam definitionem a sancto Calchedonensi concilio non sicut fidei symbolum, sed sicut definitionem esse positam ad peremptionem

The general pattern of the responses in the *Codex*, in short, was to preserve as many of the traditional tropes of Nicaea's unique authority as possible by conforming Chalcedon to the model of conciliar activity already established at Ephesus I: Nicaea had been formally confirmed, and nothing had been added to or subtracted from it.[150] In this way, the conservative Nicene preferences of most bishops, already evident in their protests against Marcian's agenda at Chalcedon's second session, had been in large part reasserted.

Price's conclusion that the *Codex* thus espoused a form of 'Nicene fundamentalism' is, however, rather too simplistic.[151] For the effect of recognizing the legitimacy of Chalcedon, however minimal and half-hearted that recognition might have been, further encouraged the subtle narrativization of the Nicene past. Many of the responses now expressed the faith of Nicaea in terms of a succession of councils, each of which combated a particular heresy: Nicaea against the Arians, Constantinople against the Pneumatomachi, Ephesus against the Nestorians, and now Chalcedon against the Eutychians.[152] This was accompanied by a democratization of Nicene tropes, so that each council had a special number of fathers, and the assistance of the Holy Spirit.[153] Beneath the continued deployment of 'sola Nicaea' rhetoric, then, there was the nascent articulation of a conciliar story, within which Nicaea was just one—albeit a special—part.

It is important to note, moreover, that this 'narrative turn' in the expression of conciliar authority was not solely the preserve of the pro-Chalcedonians. For the earliest opponents of Chalcedon similarly construed their fidelity to Nicaea through recourse to particular conciliar genealogies.[154] Theodosius' edict ratifying Ephesus II had, after all, set out the orthodox faith as comprising three councils: Nicaea, Ephesus I, and Ephesus II. And, whilst the anti-Chalcedonian Alexandrian response in the *Codex* had refused to accept Chalcedon's innovatory inclusion of Constantinople 381 within that elite group,[155]

Nestorianae vesaniae et exclusionem eorum qui salute incarnationis domini nostril Iesu Christi denegare noscuntur, ut agnoscant omnes qui ob hoc scandalum patiuntur, quia neque nos post orthodoxum symbolum CCCXVIII sanctorum patrum aut augmentum aut deminutionem in his quae sic perfecte et a sancto spiritu sunt definite [...].

[150] Similarly, the approval of Leo's *Tomus* at Chalcedon could be treated as analogous to the approval of Cyril's *Second Letter* at Ephesus I: for instance, *ACO* II.5, 48.54–49.4. The fact that Ephesus I had emphatically not issued its own *Definitio Fidei* further helps to explain why this element of Chalcedon's achievement was so little mentioned.

[151] R. M. Price (2009), 'The Development of a Chalcedonian Identity in Byzantium (451–553)', *CHRC* 89, 309.

[152] For instance, *ACO* II.5, 32:6–15, 39:14–22, 85:3–18, 47:22–48:12, 52:37–53:26.

[153] For instance: *ACO* II.5, 28:33, 30:24, 30:30–1:2, 33:13, 34:18–20, 43:38–40, 56:13, 66:25, 83:40, 89:7.

[154] *Contra* Sieben, *Konzilsidee,* 250–63, who depicts the anti-Chalcedonians as rigidly committed to a 'sola Nicaea' rhetorical position.

[155] *ACO* II.5, 22:18. Neither Ephesus I nor Ephesus II, of course, had acknowledged Constantinople 381.

Timothy Aelurus subsequently found it politically expedient to recognize its authority.[156] Thus, the ill-fated *Encyclicon* of Basiliscus (475) demanded that the pure and perfect faith of the 318 fathers was to be confessed via the acceptance of Nicaea, Constantinople, Ephesus I, and Ephesus II.[157]

The earliest reception of Chalcedon, then, suggests that there was a significant overlap in the ideas of 'Nicaea' being advanced by the opposing parties. Both pro- and anti-Chalcedonians continued to give priority to the Nicene Council and its Creed, and expressed this preference in terms of the traditional rhetoric of Nicaea's unique authority and sole sufficiency. However, both sides were increasingly articulating Nicaea's pre-eminence via narratives of conciliar activity, and the various documents and fathers associated with those select councils. Chalcedon, in other words, had not so much solved the problem of 'Nicaea' as shifted it onto new ground, namely, the question of *which* councils had truly confirmed and so authentically re-received the unchanging faith of Nicaea. This genealogical approach was still conceptually underdeveloped, since it lacked the criteria by which 'true' and 'false' councils could be convincingly distinguished—hence the reliance of the earliest responses on the mere assertion that Ephesus II, or Chalcedon, was or was not in line with Nicaea. Nevertheless, it is evident that, by the 450s, the deeper legacy of Ephesus I was starting to be felt, as bishops began to grapple more seriously with how the 'monopoly' of Nicaea could be preserved alongside the recognition of its authoritative re-expression in subsequent councils.

[156] In Timothy's letter to the city of Constantinople (*c.*460): R. Y. Ebied and L. R. Wickham (1970), 'A Collection of Unpublished Syriac Letters of Timothy Aelurus', *JTS* 21.2, 351; cf. P. Blaudeau (2006), *Alexandrie et Constantinople (451–91): De l'histoire à la géo-ecclésiologie* (Rome: Ecole française de Rome), esp. 178, 251–2.

[157] The most complete text is given in: Schwartz, *Gr. 1431*, 49–51: cf. Ps.-Zach., *H.E.* V.2; Evag., *H.E.* III.4.

8

Conclusion

The foregoing analysis has sought to delineate the ways in which appeals to Nicaea shaped the dramatic conciliar activity of the mid-fifth century. This final chapter begins by summarizing the key conclusions that have arisen, and then goes on to offer some wider theological reflections.

Firstly, and most obviously, an argument has been made for the discursive centrality of the idea of Nicaea in the conciliar controversies of these two decades. The inherited shibboleths of Nicaea's unique authority and sole sufficiency meant that every new articulation of orthodoxy had to demonstrate that its propositions derived from, and were faithful to, the teaching of the Nicene Creed. Yet, at the same time, the very inadequacy of the credal text to resolve the doctrinal disputes of a later age acted to stimulate fresh and creative uses of the Nicene tradition—strategies that sought more effectively to shape the malleable past to the needs of the present. In this way, we have suggested, 'Nicaea' was not only central to orthodox discourse during these years, but acted as both problem *and* solution, both generating conflict (because of its textual inadequacy and susceptibility to multiple interpretations), and, through its dynamic re-expression, providing the very means by which that conflict could be overcome.

Secondly, it has been contended that the discursive flexibility of 'Nicaea' brought to the fore the question of how to arbitrate persuasively between competing claims to Nicene fidelity. For, increasingly, the appeal to Nicaea was being used not only as the means to advance new theological arguments, but precisely as the means to evade them. For the actual content of the Creed was (at a Christological level) so basic that a host of heterodox opinions could find shelter amidst its branches, and the traditional mantra of 'no additions, no subtractions' could be deployed to condemn *any* exposition of the Creed's teaching as a flagrant attack upon Nicaea's sufficiency. In this way, the debates of these decades exposed the increasing inadequacy of a *mere* confession of the Nicene Creed, or a *mere* repetition of its clauses. As Cyril explained to Nestorius in his *Third Letter*, simply to profess the text with one's voice was no longer enough to demonstrate one's orthodoxy. For this reason, authentic fidelity to Nicaea was increasing articulated not solely on the basis of the Creed

itself, but rather through reference to those select authorities that, it was claimed, reliably interpreted the Creed's fuller meaning.

Thirdly, then, this study examined the various attempts, beginning at Ephesus 431, to articulate these new hermeneutical strategies for 'reading' Nicaea aright. The difficulty that Cyril encountered in persuasively refuting Nestorius' exegesis of the Nicene Creed on the basis of the credal text alone forced him to seek a solution outside the text, in the careful layering of supplementary documentary authorities. In his written proceedings of 22 June, Cyril thus established his own *Second Letter* as the necessary interpretive key for unlocking the true teaching of the Creed. Moreover, by appealing to a shared pneumatological inspiration that he understood as uniting the texts, Cyril could claim an underlying harmony of meaning between them. The Holy Spirit, in this way, provided the 'glue' that allowed Cyril to assert continuity between past and present expressions of the same Nicene faith, and so helped him to counter accusations that he had impiously added to the Creed. By contrast, Nestorius' 'bare' reading of Nicaea—his *mere* dependence on the credal text—could be portrayed as the arrogant rejection of the 'royal road' of Spirit-led patristic testimony.

In addition, the convening of Ephesus as a second oecumenical council, Nicaea's great successor, opened up further discursive possibilities in the battle over the character of the Nicene faith. It allowed Cyril to present the activity of his assembly as a kind of conciliar mimesis, as a new gathering of 'fathers', inspired by the same Holy Spirit that had guided the fathers of 325, met to confirm the unchanging Nicene faith. Thus, just as Cyril argued that, at a textual level, the Nicene Creed could only be truly apprehended via its authoritative exposition in his *Second Letter*, so he likewise contended that, at a conciliar level, the Nicene Council could only be authentically acknowledged by recognizing his own council as the locus of its authoritative confirmation. Paradoxically, then, the more that the unique status of Nicaea was emphasized, the more necessary it became to affirm further interpretive authorities—authorities that appeared, prima facie, to threaten that unique status. In this way, Cyril's contribution at Ephesus was at its most innovative precisely when it was at its most conservative, and change was most effectively achieved by denying that there had been any change at all. However, the repeated challenges to Cyril's strategy during and after the summer of 431 suggest that it remained, for the time being, a work in progress.

Fourthly, it has been argued that the 'textual turn' at Ephesus inaugurated a profound shift in how the Nicene Creed was encountered and interpreted. By placing the Creed in the carefully tailored documentary context of his formal *acta*, Cyril could present its teaching via a subtle layering of other textual authorities, and so more precisely shape its authoritative interpretation. Flavian, Dioscorus, and Marcian's subsequent moulding of their own conciliar records vindicates the truth of Cyril's conviction that that battle for 'Nicaea'

was more convincingly waged on the page than in the flesh. Furthermore, by promoting the written record of his conciliar proceedings as the locus of his council's achievement and authority, Cyril not only helped to fix the 'pure' form of the Nicene Creed as alone authentic, but also ensured that the Creed would be increasingly read via its inclusion in his documentary *acta*. At Ephesus II, for instance, the Nicene Creed was authoritatively affirmed through quoting its text within the wider citation of the proceedings of Ephesus I. At a textual level too, then, it was no longer enough *merely* to cite the text of the Creed as the proof of one's orthodoxy—rather, the text had to be cited within the context of its formal conciliar confirmation.

As we have seen, however, the textual basis of the Ephesine confirmation of Nicaea allowed a number of divergent trajectories of reception to develop in the years after 431. Whilst some continued entirely to resist Cyril's Nicene self-presentation, and sought to demonstrate how Cyril's *acta* in fact revealed the tyrannical and heretical character of his assembly, others (such as John of Antioch) affirmed the Ephesine proceedings, but 'read' them in a craftily minimal manner, and so rendered their construal of the Nicene faith entirely unthreatening to Antiochene Christological emphases. Moreover, it has been contended that, after Ephesus, Cyril himself sought to reorientate the reception of Ephesus around the 22 July (rather than the 22 June) proceedings, in order to sharpen its teeth against his Antiochene opponents.

These findings have several important implications. They demonstrate that the reception of Ephesus I was far slower, and far less clear-cut, than has previously been assumed. They reveal that Eutyches' and Dioscorus' agenda in 448–49 to advance the so-called 'Canon 7' as the principal work of Ephesus I was not an eccentric deviation from Cyril's own intentions, but precisely a fulfilment of them. And they suggest the need for a considerable reconceptualization of the subsequent conciliar upheavals of 448–51, which, on the foregoing analysis, are to be understood primarily in terms of a conflict between different textual receptions of the Ephesine *acta* (each of which contained, variously contextualized, the formally confirmed text of the Nicene Creed).

Fifthly, it has been argued that the respective contributions of Ephesus II and Chalcedon to the idea of Nicaea need significant reassessment. Dioscorus' council did not involve the crude imposition of a Nicene fundamentalism, but rather articulated, with some subtlety, how the successive Spirit-guided conciliar achievements of Nicaea, Ephesus I, and Ephesus II had allowed the unchanging faith of Nicaea to be presented afresh. It was primarily Theodosius' sudden death, rather than any intrinsic incoherence in its Nicene self-presentation, which determined that the legacy of Ephesus II would be overturned. Even so, by 'weaponizing' Canon 7, and making it the means to resist *any* further doctrinal definition, the strategy of Dioscorus and his allies threatened to 'fix' and so ossify the idea of Nicaea, removing the very discursive flexibility that allowed it to function as a meaningful locus of orthodoxy.

At Chalcedon, Marcian's desire to promulgate a new Nicene statement of faith certainly represented a creative reworking of the Nicene tradition, and his use of Constantinople 381 to redefine the scope of Canon 7 was commendably shrewd. However, the degree of episcopal resistance to his agenda ensured that the earliest reception of his *Definitio* involved in large part a reassertion of the very tropes of Nicaea's authority and sufficiency that Marcian had sought to transcend. And yet, we identified at Chalcedon, and in its aftermath, new and fruitful lines of enquiry opening up—not least in the attempt to grapple with the growing narrativization of the conciliar past, and the issue of how, in that context, Nicaea's unique status could continue to be persuasively affirmed.

At the beginning of this study, it was suggested that a careful analysis of appeals to 'Nicaea' in the conciliar context of the fifth century could be beneficial not only in clarifying certain historical matters regarding the articulation and negotiation of orthodoxy during this period, but also in shedding light on wider questions of doctrinal development and theological reception. The conciliar controversies of 431–51 revealed both that the mere repetition of fidelity to Nicaea as a litmus test of orthodoxy had become inadequate, and also that the discursive shibboleths of Nicaea's unique authority and sole sufficiency remained too central to be abandoned altogether. The most fruitful response to this dilemma—found especially in Cyril's Ephesine *acta* and in the Chalcedonian *Definitio*—was to present subsequent conciliar pronouncements as involving the 'rejuvenating reception' of the unchanging Nicene faith, so that authentic continuity with Nicaea was expressed precisely through change, modification, and the re-narration of the Nicene past. In this way, fidelity to the idea of Nicaea was rescued from becoming a 'dead hand' of tradition that impeded and stultified the fresh articulation of orthodoxy, and became, instead, the very means by which the meaningful re-expression of the faith could be secured.

In this context, then, a narrative of doctrinal development seems misplaced. The reception of 'Nicaea' in this period proceeded not through a smooth process of ever-greater clarification and ever-deeper understanding, but rather through a series of episodic reformulations, as particular historical circumstances and agendas acted simultaneously to reveal the inadequacies of previous construals and to stimulate creative attempts to expound Nicaea afresh. These attempts frequently involved a complex negotiation between past and present—that sleight of hand (or, to put it less negatively, that fruitful re-imagining or re-remembering) whereby due obeisance to Nicaea's authority and status could be offered, while new avenues of exploration could be opened up. The endeavour did not always succeed, either because the breach with inherited shibboleths of orthodoxy was too blatant, or because the aggressive reassertion of those tropes expressed a kind of calculated inflexibility intended precisely to obstruct meaningful reflection.

To put this in the categories of Jauss and Rush, the lasting power of the idea of Nicaea emerged in and through its subsequent active receptions (or historical concretizations), as it became an agent of effective dialogic provocation, challenging its readers by its newly felt strangeness, unfamiliarity or apparent inadequacy, and so helping to vivify the ongoing orthodox tradition.[1] Moreover, we have noted, especially in Cyril's presentation of the Nicene faith, that the role of the Holy Spirit was crucial, acting as a kind of pneumatological 'glue' securing continuity between past and present conciliar activity. This emphasis helpfully reinforces the recent work of Quash, who has developed Jauss's thesis by emphasizing that authentic reception inevitably involves a pneumatological dimension.[2] Changing historical circumstances, for Quash, are themselves a gift of the Spirit, since they allow a text to offer different meanings, and to generate new insights, as a succession of readers come to the text with fresh questions. The historical 'givens' of contingency, provisionality, and particularity, then, are not there to frustrate the apprehension of true doctrine (as if such doctrine were an idealized Form floating free of time and place), but are rather the Spirit-guided arenas within which truth is found.[3]

In commenting on the legacy of Chalcedon, Rahner strikingly articulated a similar insight:

> Anyone who takes seriously the 'historicity' of human truth (in which God's truth too has become incarnate in revelation) must see that neither the abandonment of a formula nor its preservation in a petrified form does justice to human understanding. For history is precisely not an atomized beginning-ever-anew; it is rather (the more spiritual it is) a becoming-new which preserves the old, and preserves it all the more as old, the more spiritual this history is. But this preservation, which recognizes the true uniqueness of something which has taken place once and for all, is only historical preservation when the history goes on, and the movement of reflexion departs from the formula which has been reached in order to discover it (just this old formula itself) again.[4]

This sort of account helps to eschew the errors of both a crudely 'Protestant' narrative of orthodoxy (in which doctrine is abstracted and ahistoricized)

[1] See especially Rush, 'Reception Hermeneutics'. In Jauss's words: 'The "verdict of the ages" on a literary work is . . . the successive unfolding of the potential for meaning that is embedded in a work and actualized in the stages of its historical reception as it discloses itself to understanding judgment': Jauss, *Aesthetic of Reception*, 30.

[2] Quash, *Found Theology*, esp. 123–64, 281–92.

[3] Quash, *Found Theology*, esp. 1–30. Ayres helpfully counsels against an over-confidence in discerning exactly *how* and *where* the Spirit is working in history: Ayres, *Nicaea*, 427–9.

[4] K. Rahner (1954), 'Chalkedon: Ende oder Anfang', in A. Grillmeier and H. Bacht (eds), *Das Konzil von Chalkedon: Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Würzburg: Echter), III, 4; quoted in translation in B. E. Daley (2018), *God Visible: Patristic Christology Reconsidered* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 4. Rahner goes on to add the helpful remark that 'the history of theology is by no means just the history of the progress of doctrine, but also a history of forgetting': see Rahner, 'Chalkedon', 5; quoted in translation in Daley, *God Visible*, 24.

and a crudely 'Catholic' one (in which doctrine develops smoothly and progressively, so that the work of the Holy Spirit is domesticated by being rendered predictable). For, if the work of the ecclesial reader or interpreter is unavoidably contextual and provisional (a consequence of human finitude and human sin), then the continuing potency of a theological locus such as Nicaea must reside less in its ability to 'solve' new doctrinal questions fully and finally (an achievement which can never be other than illusory) and more in its ability to provoke fruitful new questions.[5] In this study, we have noted a repeated tendency, by no means the preserve of a single theological party or ecclesiastical faction, to seek to *close down* the reception of Nicaea, to 'fix' and so immobilize its interpretation, rendering it mute to further doctrinal enquiries—or, in a related strategy, to pledge fidelity to the credal text as a way of evading deeper reflection on its meaning. Indeed, in this regard the fervently anti-Cyril Nestorius and the fervently pro-Cyril Eutyches were ultimately united in a common enterprise, which was to abandon the creative negotiation of Nicaea's reception in favour of a 'mere' repetition of its clauses.

Nicaea had, of course, originally emerged out of the need to transcend this mere repetition of inherited formulae and modes of thinking. The Creed, and especially its *homoousios*, had been necessary to resolve the impasse created by the apparent inadequacy of scriptural language to resolve a profound doctrinal controversy. So too, a century later, a fresh set of theological convulsions threatened to usher in a new methodological stalemate, now centred not on Scripture but on the Nicene Creed itself. Just as Arius' avowed fidelity to Scripture had been confounded by a Creed that claimed to interpret Scripture's teaching afresh, so too Nestorius' and Eutyches' avowed fidelity to the Creed would be confounded by the articulation of a fresh hermeneutic for 'reading' that same Creed aright. It was a fittingly 'Nicene' response to a dilemma that Nicaea itself had helped to create.

The various ways in which the idea of Nicaea was articulated and argued over during the mid-fifth century thus offer, in the final analysis, a fascinating series of insights into the 'making of orthodoxy' in the early Church. They reveal one aspect of that ongoing endeavour that marks the activity of the Church in every age: namely, how the eternal revelation of God in Christ might meaningfully be apprehended by humans who live below, in particular contexts and particular times. The fruitful openness of the Nicene Creed to fresh rediscovery offers a glimpse into that process, as an ongoing gift from the One who makes all things new.

[5] Or even, as Williams playfully puts it, 'fertile and suggestive mistakes': Williams, *Arius*, 267. The fecundity of Nicaea was thus demonstrated in its power to provoke dissatisfaction with inherited patterns of what Anatolios terms 'closed, narrowly constructed coherences': K. Anatolios (2011), *Retrieving Nicaea: The Development and Meaning of Trinitarian Doctrine* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic), 35.

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